THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Seven Wise Masters

OF

ROME.

Now newly Corrected, better Explained in many places, and Enlarged with many pretty Pictures, lively expressing the full

HISTORY.

London, Printed for *Matt. Wotton*, and *G. Conyers*, and are to be sold by *J. Deacon*, at the *Angel* in *Guilt-spur-street* without *Newgate*. 1688.

x 823
Se 825
1688

Gen. Res. Selloch Mar. 1973

To the Reader.

FOR thy better delight, and more plainly to set forth the History to thy view, I have to my great cost added many Pictures, lively expressing the most material points of mine. If I may receive thy thanks, I think it a sufficient reward. The History of it self is both Ancient and Moral, and containeth in it much Learning.

When Ignorance having a thick and dull ear, blinded most People, Men are compelled to draw the rude multitude to Attention of good Instruction by such pleasing allurements of Tales and Fables, as in this Book is set down; that as the mind is fed and delighted with the sweetness of Fabulous Stories, the Soul it self at the end (by often tasting the same Nourishment) grows quicker-sighted; to behold the hidden and Mystical Wisdom contained under such close Riddles. For in few words, to give you the meaning of this Moral, it is thus; The Emperor may signifie the World, who having

ving but one only Son, (who is man) him to bring up well is all his care. But man losing his own Mother, (who is Reason or Divine Grace) falling into the hand of his Step-mother, (signifying *Sin*) who is an Empress of great bewitching, and one that commands the World; She works by all possible means the confusion of Man, and would prevail against his weakness, but that a Star from Heaven (by which is meant Goodness from above) instructs Man how to avoid the Allurements of Sin, by not opening his mouth to bid her welcome. And the better to prevent her mischief, he hath *Seven Wise Masters*, which are the Seven Liberal Sciences, to give him wholsome instructions, and by those helps save him from mortal danger. So that being thus armed, Man liveth to batter down Sin, (figured in the death of the Empress and her Minion) and in the end to gain a Rich Crown of Glory and Happiness, set ready for all those that in this Life labour to attain to Heaven by doing well.

This is the Explanation of the Moral; of which if thou make right use, it will be a rich Banquet to thy Soul. Farewel.

Here

Here Beginneth the

HISTORY

OF THE

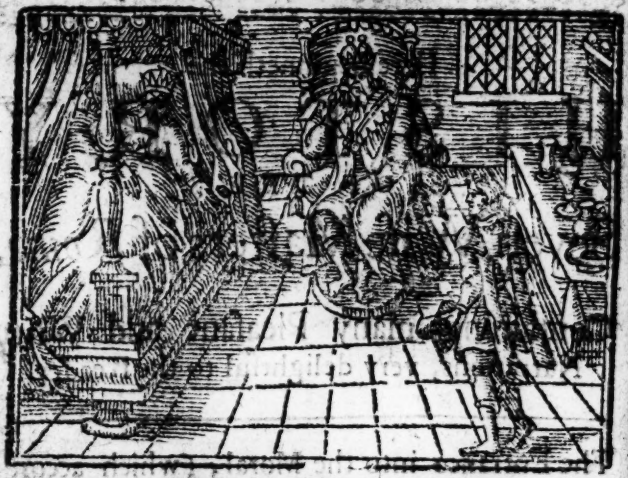
Seven Wise Masters of *Rome*.

Containing many Pleasant and Witty Narrations, very delightful to the Reader.

The Entrance into the Moral, (which according to things of Commick Pleasure) properly begins with a Funeral.

SOmetime in the City of Rome there was a Famous Emperor named Pontianus, a man of great wisdom, he took to his wife a Kings Daughter that was very fair and amiable, to all people gracious, and to her Husband right dear: she conceived by him, and was delivered of a Son named Diocletian. The Child grew apace, and of all people was beloved: and when he was of the age of seven years, his Mother the Empress falling sick, and feeling her self that she might not live, sent after her Lord the Emperor (being rode forth on Progress) a Messenger, that he should return without tarrying, if ever he would see her alive.

And



And when he was come, she said unto him, O my dear Lord, of this Sickness I may not escape, wherefore the natural and tender love and care that is to me, towards you and your Son, makes a suit to you before my death. He replyed, desire what you will, I shall not deny you any thing. Then said she, after my death you will take another Wife, as is most convenient: wherefore I beseech you, that she over my Son have no power, but that he be nourished far from her, and trained up in learning. The Emperor answered, my most dear Wife, your Petition in all things shall be performed. Then turned the Empress and gave up the Ghost. Many days after the Emperor bewailed her death, and long after shewed his heavyness, and would in no wise be joyful.

How

How the Emperor committed and delivered his Son to the Seven Wise Masters to be instructed in Learning.

UPon a time as the Emperor lay in his bed, he thought himself inwardly of his Son, saying in his heart, I have but one only Son, the which shall be my Heir: it is good while he is young, that he be set to learn Cunning and Wisdom, by which he may after my death govern and rule the Empire; intimating thereby that a worthy Prince taking upon him so great a weight and charge, as the Government of a Kingdom, ought first to learn to be his own Governour and to master his own affections. So that when he was early risen up from his Bed, he caused to be called the Lords of his Council before him, and of them took advice what were best therein to be done. And they answered, Lord, in Rome are seven Wise Masters, who live in great fame for their Excellencie in Arts, grave Counsel, & Instructions; let them be sent for, and deliver them your Son to be fostered and instructed in Learning. The Emperor understanding that, sent his Letters made powerful by his own Seal, to the Seven Wise Masters, that they should come to him without delay: they anon came before the Emperor, and he demanded of them, if they knew wherefore he had sent for them; they answered, The cause is as your will intendeth, We know not

but

but if it please you to shew us your mind, we be ready to fulfil it to the utmost of our Powers. To whom the Emperor said, I have but one Son, which I shall deliver to you to confirm in all good ways of learning and Vertue, so that by your doctrine and wisdom, he may more wisely govern the Empire after my decease.

The first Master named Pantillas, said, Lord deliver me your Son, and I shall teach him as much cunning within seven years, as I and all my fellows can.

Then spake the second Master, named Lentullus, Sir, of long time I have served you, and hitherto have had no reward. I demand nothing of you, but that you deliver me your Son to govern, and I shall make him as cunning within six years as I and all my fellows.

The

The third Maſter named Craton, ſaid, my Lord, many times I have been with you on the Sea, in peril of my life, and have had no manner of reward: if I might for my recompence obtain that you would vouchſafe to commit your Son under my Governance, I ſhould inform him as much within five years, if his wit will thereto attain, as I and all my fellows can.

Then ſtood up the fourth Maſter named Malquidrack, who was right lean of Body, and ſaid, My Lord, remember I and all my Predeceſſors have ſerved Emperors, and received no reward; wherefore I ask no other thing but that you deliver me your Son to teach, and I ſhall make him take as much Science and Wiſdom within four years as I and all my fellows have learned in all our lives.

Then ſpake the fifth Maſter, that was named Joſephus: Lord, I am old, and many times am called to your Council, and you know that my counſel hath profited you, and ſo likewiſe may it do hereafter: Yet I deſire no more, but that you deliver me your Son, and I ſhall inſtruct him in as much cunning and Science, that he within three years ſhall be prompt in Wit as much as I and all my Fellows have.

Then came the ſixth Maſter named Cleophes, who ſaid like to the other, promiſing to inform the Child in all their Cunning in two years.

The seventh Master also desired the Child, and promised to learn him within one year, the Sciences and Wisdom of them all.

When all this was done, the Emperor said, My trusty Friends, I am very much bound to thank you all, and every one of you, for that you have so earnestly desired to foster and instruct my Son: If I should now commit him to one and not to another, thereupon would ensue much dissention among you: Therefore to you all, and every of you, I commit my Son to be nouristed and taught. The Masters hearing this, expressing both their greatness of joy, and forwardness in will to the Emperor, all with one harmony of consent received his Son, and led him towards the Court of Rome. Upon the way spake Craton to his Fellows; if we this Child should teach within the City of Rome, there is so great resort and concourse of People, that it would hinder him in Learning; I know a fair place from Rome some two miles, right pleasant and delectable, there let us make a foursquare Chamber of Stone, and put him therein; and upon the Walls thereof, let us paint and write the seven Liberal Arts, so that the Child at all times may see and behold his Doctrine therein as well as in his Book. This advice pleased them all. and was done accordingly in every point: the Masters diligently every day, during seven years taught and instructed the Child, and de-

determined among themselves, and said, it is good that we examine our Disciple, to see at what perfection our pains hath arrived, and what strength and growth his vertue and knowledge is come to; and they all wisely and Religiously accorded to that counsel: then said Master Pantillas, how shall we prove him; Craton said, let every one of us as he sleepeth, put under every corner of his Bed an Olive-leaf, and then we shall know if he perceived or felt any thing, or not: this done, he awaking, greatly marvelled and lifted up his eyes towards the roof of the Chamber fervently. The Masters seeing that, said, wherefore lift you up your eyes so sharply: he answered, it is no marvel; for in my sleep I saw the uppermost part of my Chamber inclined towards the earth, or else under me it was lifted up: the Masters hearing this, said among themselves, if this Child live he shall be a man of great cunning and fame.

How the Emperor by the Counsel of the great Princes and Lords of his Empire, wedded another Wife.

THe Princes and great Lords of the Empire in the mean time came to the Emperor and said, my Lord, ye have only one Son, it is possible he might die, therefore it were profitable that you would wed another Wife.

that thereby your joys and hopes may be blest with far more certainty and assured happiness in your Race and Issue, to the intent that the Empire of Rome be not left without an Heir. Moreover you are so mighty, that if it should happen you to get many Children, you may promote and advance them all to great Dignities and Lordships. Whereupon answered the Emperor, it is your counsel, that I shall take another Wife: then seek me one that is gracious, a pure Virgin, Fair and Gentle born, and then I shall follow your Counsel and advice. They went and sought and searched out many Kingdoms and Countries; and at the last they found the Kings Daughter of Castile, that was right fair and beautiful, and her they gave the Emperor to Wife; who behaved her self so well, that anon he was so greatly taken in her love, that he forgot all the sorrow of heart he had taken for the death of his first Wife. And when they had lived long together without any Children, and when the Empress saw that she might not conceive, when she heard the Emperor had a Son with the Seven Wise Masters, to be fostered and taught, to the great good and profit of the Empire, she thought in her self and wished his death, and from that very hour imagined how she might conspire his destruction. It happened on a Night as the Emperor lay in his

bed

bed he said unto the Empress: my most dear and best beloved Wife, I shall now open to you the secrets of my heart, for under the Sun there is no Creature that I love so well as you, and therefore trust in my love.

Then said the fair Empress, if it be so as you say, I require of you one little Boon or Petition. Desire what you will said the Emperor, and all that in me is possible, I shall fulfil and give it you. Then said the Empress, my dear Lord, you know I have no Child by you yet conceived, for which I am sore pensive and heavy, but Fame, that never conceals it self long in true joy, hath delivered this happy truth to me, that ye have one Son only, the which is set to the Seven Wise Masters to be taught and governed, and him I hold and require for my own Son: wherefore I beseech ye send for him, that I may see him, and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Hereupon answered the Emperor, it is fifteen years past since I saw him, your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent the Emperor sent unto the Seven Wise Masters a Letter sealed with his secret Sign, that upon pain of death they should bring his Son in the Feast of Penticost following.

How the Seven Wise Masters after the sight of the Emperors Letter would first observe the course and divine sore-shewing of the Firma-

ment, and Planets, whether it were good to obey his Commandments or not.

AND when the Masters by the Letter had understood the Emperors will, in the night they went and beheld the Stars in the Firmament, whether it should be expedient to bring the Child to the Emperor or not; and they saw clearly in the Stars, that if they should lead the Child in that time assigned, at the first word he should speak he should die an evil death: wherefore they were all very sorry: and as they beheld another Star, they saw, that if they delivered not the Child at the day aforesaid, they should lose their heads. Then said one of them, of two evils the least is to be chosen: it is better that all we die, than that the Child should lose his life:

there-

therefore that we may save the Childs life, let us go to the Emperor. And as they were thus sorrowful, the Child came down from his Chamber, and seeing his Masters so heavy, he demanded the cause of their heavines: whereunto they answered, Sir, we have received your Fathers Letters, that upon pain of death, now this high Feast of Penticost, we shall lead you to your Country, whereupon we have beholden the Firmament, wherein we clearly find, that if we (within the time prefixed) present you to your Father, at the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth, ye shall be to the most vilest death condemned. Then said the Child, I must also behold the Firmament with the Stars: and so he did; and found clearly in a little Star, that if he could abstain from speaking seven days he should preserve and save his life. And after he had seen this, called his Masters and shewed them the Star, and said, behold my dear Masters, I see perfectly in the Star, that if I abstain my self seven days, I shall save my life. Ye are now seven Masters, the wisest of all the world, it is an easie thing for you, every of you for me one day to answer, and with your wise answer every of you his day, my life may save and keep; and in the eighth day I shall speak my self, and save my life, and all you from peril. As the Masters did behold that certain Star, they thought with themselves that

the Child had said truth, saying, Almighty God be thanked that the wisdom and cunning of our Disciple exceedeth us all. Then said the first Master Pantillas, Lord I shall speak for you the first day, and save your life. And Lentullus the second Master, said, I shall for you the second day answer: and so consequently every of them promised to answer for himself his day: and this said, they cloathed the Child in Purple, leaped on horseback with a fair Company, and hasted with the Child to the Emperor.

How the Emperor rode to meet his Son coming from Study, with Joy, Solemnity and Triumph.

When the Emperor perceived that his Son was coming on the way, he rode with great joy to meet him, and the Masters understanding

standing the coming of the Emperor, said unto the Child, it is best that we depart, that in the mean while we may provide how we may save your life. The Child said, it pleaseth me well that you do so, but have mind of me in my necessity: so they took leave and departed toward the City, and the Child came after accompanied most honourably. And as he and his Father the Emperor met, for joy he took his Son about the neck and kissed him, and said, My dear Son, now is my joy compleat, beholding in thee the treasure of my lifes comfort. How is it with you, it is long since that I saw you. He bowed down his head and answered nothing. The Father had great wonder why he spake not, and thought in himself, that his Masters had informed him so, that he riding should not speak. And when they were come into the Palace, and were descended from their Horses, the Father took the Son by the hand and led him into the Hall, and set him next him, and beheld him, and said, Tell me now how it is with your Masters, How have they instructed you these may years since I saw you: But he bowed down his head again, and spake not. The Father said, Wherefore speak ye not to me. When the Empress heard that the Emperors Son was come, she was right joyous, and said, I will go see him. She apparelled her self with rich Attire, and took with her two of her

Gen-

Gentlewomen, and went, whereas the Emperor was sitting with his Son, and set her down by the Child, and she said to the Emperor, is this your Son that hath been nourished with the seven Wise Masters; and he said, it is my Son, but he speaketh not: She said, deliver to me your Son, and if ever he speak, I shall make him. Then said the Emperor, rise and go with her: The Son did reverence to his Father as though he said, I am ready to accomplish your will; and so he went with her.

How the Empress led Diocletian the Emperors Son with her into a Chamber, to make good Cheer with him, the which he withstood.

The Empress led him with her into the Chamber, and commanded all others to avoid, and set him by her before her bed-side, and said. O my best beloved Diocletian, I have heard much of your person and beauty; but now I am glad that I may see that which my heart coveteth and loveth: for I have caused your Father to send for you, that I might have solace and joy of your Person; wherefore right heartily I give you knowledge that I for your love unto this day have kept my Virginity; speak to me therefore, and let us go to bed together: But he gave her no answer. She seeing that said, to him, O good Diocletian, which hath the half of my Soul, why speak ye not to me; or at least

shew

shew me some token of love: what shall I do? speak to me, I am ready to perform your will: And when she had thus said, she embraced him, and would have kissed his mouth, but he turned his Visage from her, and in no wise would consent: then she said again, O Son, wherefore do you thus with me? let us sleep together; & then shall ye perceive, that for your love I have kept my Virginity: but he turned his Visage again from her; he seeing that of her he was ashamed, shewing unto him her naked Body and Breasts, saying, Behold my Son, what Body I have, it is at your Will, a servant to your pleasure: give me your consent, or it shall be hard for me to depart hence in my right mind. He shewed her no manner of love, but as much as he could withdrew himself from her. When she saw that, she said, O my best Son, if it please you not to consent unto me (yet speak) perhaps for some reasonable cause? Lo, here is Pen, Ink, and Paper, then write your will, whether I may at any time hereafter trust in your love or not. The Child wrote as followeth. O Lady, God forbid that I should defile my Fathers Orchard: For I wot not what Fruit I should have of it: I know well that I should sin greatly in the sight of God, and also run in the malediction of my Father; and therefore from henceforth I pray you provoke me no more thereto.

When she had seen and read the Writing,

she tore it with her teeth: and rent her Clothes to her Navel, and scratched her Visage till it was all bloody, and cast from her all the Ornaments of her head, and cryed out with a loud voice, Come hither my Lords and help me, lest this rude and evil body shame and ravish me.

How the Empress complained to the Emperor, of the shame done unto her by his Son.

The Emperor being in the Hall and hearing the cry of the Empress, hastily run toward her Chamber with many of his Knights and Servants following him, to know the matter. Then began the Empress to cry and speak to the Emperor in this wise: O my Lord, have pity on me, behold this young man is not your Son, but the foulest for Ribaldry and actions of Luxury, that ever sin and heat put strength into: For as you know, I led him into the Chamber, and would have exhorted and caused him to have spoken; I have done as much therefore as I can or may; and whilst I moved him to have spoken, he hath endeavoured himself with me to have sinned; and because I would not consent but withstood as much as I might to flie the same, he hath made my Visage all bloody; and torn my Vesture and Ornaments off my Head as you may see; and if you had not soon come unto my calling, he had ended in me, his most foul

foul and wicked appetite. When the Emperor saw and heard this (filled with great malice and madness) he commands his Servants to lead him to the Gallows and hang him. When the Lords heard thereof they said, Lord you have but this Son only, it is not good that ye thus lightly put him to death. The Law is ordained for Transgressors, and if he must dye, let him by the Law die, lest it be said, that the Emperor in his wrath, (without Law or Justice) had put his only Son to death. As the Emperor heard this, commanded him to be put in Prison till judgment was given against him. When the Empress understood that the Child was not put to death, she wept bitterly, and would take no rest. When night came, the Emperor entred into his Chamber to go to bed, and found his Wife sorrowing: To whom he said, O my dear Lady, for what cause are ye sorrowful? She answered, know ye not that your accursed Son hath done me so much shame and dishonoured you, that you commanded him to be hanged, and yet he liveth, and your word is not performed, nor my shame revenged: to morrow (said the Emperor) he shall die by the Law: then said she, shall he so long live? Then might it happen to you as it did to a Burgess of Rome, of whom an Example is mentioned: the Emperor said, I pray you shew me this Example: that shall I do gladly says the Empress.

The

The first Example of the Empress.

IN the City of Rome was a Burgess, which had a fair Garden, wherein he had a noble Tree, the which every year brought forth fruit of good vertue, for whosoever eat thereof that were sick of any manner of sickness, or leprosie he should soon be whole and receive his sight.

It happened on a day as the Burgess went into the Garden to visit the Tree, he espied under the Tree a fair young Imp, and called to him the Gardiner, and said, my friend of this young Imp I give thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better Tree than this is. The Gardiner said, I shall it gladly do. Another time the Burgess came again into his Garden to visit the young Plant, and it appeared unto him

him that it grew not so much as it should do; and he said to the Gardiner, how may this be; and he said it is no wonder, for this great Tree hath so great Arms and Branches, that the air may not come to the rot of the young Tree; then said the Burgess, cut and hew off the Arms and the boughs, that the air may come thereto. The Gardiner did as he commanded. The Burgess came again another time to see the young Plant, and thought that it grew never the better, and said to the Gardiner, what is it that letteth this Plant not to grow now? and he said I suppose the height of the old Tree letteth the Sun, that the Rain may not come thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master unto him, hew down that Tree to the ground, for I hope of this Plant to have a better than ever that was. The Gardiner hearing his Master, hewed down the tree, and as soon as this was done, the young Plant perished, and came to nought: wherefore there came great harm; for when the poor sick people perceived that the Tree was destroyed (they cursed all them that were Counsellors and helpers thereto) by the which they oftentimes were healed and cured of their infirmities: then said the Empress to her Lord, understand ye what I have said? he answered, yea right well: Then said she, I will declare the meaning of that I have said.

The

The Declaration of the Example.

THis Tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most Noble Person, how that with your counsel and help, many poor and sick folks are greatly comforted; and the young Imp which is grown under the great Tree, is your accursed Son, that now by cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth first, how he might cut off the Arms and Boughs of your might, and how to win him the Land, and favour of the people, yea and more unnaturally, imagineth to destroy your person, that he may himself reign; but what shall then ensue thereof? All poor and feeble people shall curse them who might have destroyed your Son, and have not yet done it: Therefore I counsel you, whilst you are in power, that you destroy him, lest the curse of the people fall upon you. Then said the Emperor, ye have given me good counsel, to morrow I shall condemn him to the vilest death that can be thought upon. When the day was, the Emperor went and sat in Judgment, and commanded his Servants to lead his Son to be hanged, with Trumpets sounding in token of death. As the Emperors Son was led through the City, the common people began to weep and cry, Alas the only Son of the Emperor is led towards his death: And therewithal came Pantilas the first Master riding upon a Horse. When the Child saw

saw him, he bowed his head, as though he said, mind me, when you come before my Father, see how I am led towards the Gallows. Then the Master said to the Servants: Make no haste, for I hope, by the Grace of God, this day to deliver him from death. Then said all the people, O good Master, haste you to the Palace, and save your Disciple; he smote his Horse with his Spurs, till he came to the Palace, and knæl'd to the Emperor, and did him reverence. To whom the Emperor said: it shall never be to thee good; who answered I have deserved a better Reward. The Emperor said, thou Ipest, for I delivered my Son to thee well mannered, and now he is brought home dumb, and hath sought to work his will, to the shame of my vertuous Empress, and the dishonour of his Fathers Bed for ever; therefore this day shall he die; and ye shall die a shameful death. Then said the Master, Lord, forasmuch as your Son speaketh not, the cause whereof God knoweth, and without cause it is not, as you shall understand: and whereas you say, that he would have committed the sin of enforcement on your Empress, I shall say to you of a truth, he hath been in our Company by the space of sixteen years, and we never could perceive such an abuse by him: Therefore, my dear Lord, I shall shew you one thing, that if you put your Son to death for the words of your wife, it shall happen to you

worse than to a Knight that killed his best Grey-hound (through the words of his Wife) which saved his Son from death. Then said the Emperor to the Master, tell me that Example: The Master said, Lord, that shall I not do, for before I shall end, your Son might be dead, and then without hope shall I rehearse it: but if it please you this noble Example to hear, call again your Son till to morrow; and as you think by reason, then do with him your pleasure. As the Emperor heard that, anon he willed the Child to be called again: and in the mean time he set him in prison, while the Master finished his Tale; and then began in this manner following.

The first Example of the first Master.

THere was a valiant Knight had one only Son as you have, which he loved so much that he ordained for his Keepers three Nourishers; the first should give him suck, and feed him; the second, wash him, and keep him clean; and the third should bring him to his sleep and rest. The Knight had also a Grey-hound and a Faulcon, which he also loved right well. The Grey-hound was so good, that he never ran at any Game, but he took it, and held it till his Master came. And if his Master was disposed to go to any Battel, if he should not speed therein, anon as he should mount upon his

Horse,

Horse, the Grey-hound would take his Horse tail in his mouth, and draw backward, and cry and howl marvelously loud. By these signs, and the observations thereof, the Knight did always understand, that his journey should have very ill success. The Falcon was so gentle and hardy, that he was never cast off to his prey, but he took it.

The same Knight had great pleasure in Justing and Tourney, so that upon a time, under his Castle he proclaimed a Tournament, to the which came many great Lords and Knights. The Knight entred into the Tourney, and his Lady went with her Maidens to see it, and as they went out, after went the Nourishers, and left the Child lying in the Cradle in the Hall, where the Grey-hound lay near the Wall, and the Hawk or Falcon standing upon a Perch. In this Hall there was a Serpent lurking, to all them of the Castle unknown, which when he perceived they were all absent, he put his head out of his hole, and when he saw none but the Child in the Cradle, he went out of his hole, towards the Cradle to have slain the Child.

The Noble Falcon perceiving that, and beholding the Grey-hound that was sleeping, made such rustling with her Wings, that the Grey-hound awaked and rose upand when he saw the Serpent near the Child, anon against him he leaped, and they both fought so long, that the

Serpent had grievously wounded the Grey-hound, that he bled so sore, that the earth about the Cradle was bloody. The Grey-hound when he felt himself grievously wounded, starts fiercely upon the Serpent, and fought so sore, and eagerly, that betwixt them the Cradle was overtost, with the Child, the bottom upward, and

the Cradle having four pummels, which it fell upon, they saved the Child from having any hurt: what can be more expresst to make good the wonder in this preservation of the Child? with great pain the Grey-hound slew the Serpent, laid him down again in his place, and licked his wounds. Anon after as the Justs and Tourney was done, the Nourishers came first into the Castle, and saw the Cradle turned the up-side

down

down upon the earth, compassed round about with blood, and the Grey-hound also bloody, and said among themselves, that the Grey-hound had slain the Child, and were not so wise as to turn up the Cradle again with the Child, to see what was befallen: and said, let us run away, lest that our Master should lay the blame upon us and slay us. Running away, they met the Knights wife, and she said unto them, wherefore make ye this sorrow, and whither will you run? Then they said, O Lady, woe be to us, and to you! Why said she, what is happened? the wife: the Grey-hound, they said, that our Lord and Master loved so well, hath devoured and slain your Son, and lieth by the Wall full of blood. As the Lady heard this she presently fell to the earth, and began to weep pitiously, and said, Alas! O my dear Son, are ye thus slain? What shall I now do, that I have mine only Son thus lost? Herewithal came in the Knight from the Tourney, beholding his Lady crying, he demanded wherefore she made so great lamentation: She answered: O my Lord, the Grey-hound you loved so much, hath slain your only Son, and lieth by the Wall satiated with the blood of the Child. The Knight exceeding angry went into the Hall; the Grey-hound arose to meet him, and did fawn upon him as he was wont: But the Knight drew out his Sword, and with one stroke smote off the

Grey-hounds head; then he went to the Cradle where the Child lay, and found his Son whole, and by the Child the Serpent lay slain; and by divers signs, perceived the Grey-hound had killed the Serpent for the defence of his Child. Then with great sorrow he tore his hair, and said, Wo is me, that for the words of my wife I have slain my best Grey-Hound, which hath saved my Childs life, and slain the Serpent; therefore I will put my self to penance, and so he brake his Sword in three pieces, and went towards the Holy-Land, and abode there all the days of his life. Then said the Master to the Emperor, Lord, understand ye what I have said; and he answered, right well. The Master, said, if you put your Son to death for the words of your Wife, it shall happen to you worse than it did to the Knight for his Grey-hound. The Emperor said you have shewn me a fair Example: without doubt this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Master, if you do so, you do wisely, and I thank you, that you have spared him this day for my sake.

The second Complaint of the Empress: A sorrow mingled with much cunning and falsehood.

When the Empress heard the Child was not yet dead, she began to weep bitterly, and sat her down on the earth in ashes, and would

would not lift up her head. When the Emperor heard that, he entred the Chamber, and said unto her, O good Wife, wherefore make you all this sorrow, and trouble your self so much? She said, ask ye that of me? know you not what shame I have suffered of your unhappy Son, and ye have promised me, that you would see justice to be thereupon executed on him, and yet he liveth? Of a truth it will happen to you as to a Shepherd and a Boar. The Emperor said, I pray you shew me that Example for my learning: she said yesterday I shewed you one, and saw no good effect that came thereof: To what end shall I now do the like? Nevertheless I shall declare this noble Example unto you, as hereafter you shall hear.

The second Example of the Empress.

THere was sometime an Emperor which had a great Forrest, wherein was a wild Boar so cruel and fierce, that he devoured men going through the Forrest. The Emperor therefore being right heavy, proclaimed throughout his Dominions, That whosoever could slay the Boar, should have his only Daughter to his Wife, and the Empire after his death. As this was in all places proclaimed, there was not one man found that durst give the adventure. But there was a Shepherd, who thought in himself, might I the Boar overcome and slay, I should

not only advance my self, but also my generation and kindred. So he took his Shepherds staff in his hand, went to the Forest; and as the Boar had of him a sight, he drew towards the Herdsman, but he for fear climbed into a Tree, and then the Boar began to bite and gnaw the

Tree, so that the Herd thought shortly he would have overthrew it. This Tree was loaden with plenty of fruit, and the Herd gathered thereof, and cast them to the Boar, insomuch that when he was filled therewith, he laid him down to sleep; which when the Herd perceived, he by little and little descended the Tree, and with the one hand clawed the Boar, and with the other held him about the Tree, and seeing the Boar slept very soundly, drawing out his knife,

smote

smote the Boar to the heart, and killed him, and shortly after wedded the Emperors Daughter, and after the death of her Father, he was made Emperor. Then said she my Lord, wot ye not what I have said: he said, right well: Then said she, this mighty Boar betokeneth your most noble Person, against whom may no man withstand, neither by Wisdom, nor strength. The Shepherd with his Staff, to the person of your ungracious Son, who with his Staff of cunning, beginneth to play with you, as the Herdsman clawed the Boar, made him sleep, and after killed him. In the same manner, the Masters of your Son, by those false Fables and Narrations claw you, and gloss with you, until your Son slay you, that he may reign. Then said the Emperor, God forbid they should do to me as he did to the wild Boar; and he said unto her, this day my Son shall die: and she answered, if you do so, then do ye wisely. Then the Emperor the second time sitting in Judgment, commanded to lead him to the place of Execution appointed for that purpose. Whilst he was going, the second Master came before the Emperor, doing him great reverence, as before he shewed in the coming of the first Master, to whom the second Master said: O my Lord and Emperor, if you should slay your Son for the words of your Wife, it shall happen worse to you than it did

to

to a certain Knight which for the words of his Wife was unjustly put upon the Pillory. The Emperor said, O good Master tell me how that happened: And he said, My Lord I shall not say it, unless you will call your only Son from the death, until the Example be told, which if it turn not you from your purpose, then your will be fulfilled: then the Emperor commanded the Child should be called again: and after this manner following, the second Master began to tell:

The Example of the second Master.

IN a City was an ancient Knight, which wedded a young wife, and fair, as you have done, whom he loved above all earthly things: The Knight was a very circumspect and careful Husband, insomuch that every night he locked the door with his own hands, and laid the keys under his beds-head. In that City was a Law or Custom, that a certain hour in the night a Bell was used to be rung, that after the ringing of the said Bell, if any man or woman were by the Watch-men found about the Streets, all that night they should be kept in Prison, and on the morrow set upon the Pillory, that all people might behold them.

The said Knight had little lust at fleshly deeds, to perform the desires and appetite of his young

Wife;

Wife; wherefore every night she having a Paramour, her Husband sleeping, took the keys from under his beds-head and went to her Love, and when she came again, laid the keys under her Husbands head: and thus they played many a time.

It happened upon a night, that the Knight awaked from his sleep, and missed his wife, and the keys from his Beds-head, whereupon he rose up, and went unto the doors, and found them open, the which he bolted fast within, and went up again into his Chamber, and looked out of the window towards the street, and when it was near the third Cocks Crow, his Wife came from her best beloved, and found the door shut and bolted within: then was she sorrowful; Neverthelels she knocked to have come in. Then spake the Knight out of the Window, O thou most wicked and unclean Wife, now I know that many times thou hast forsaken my Bed, and gone and done adultery; now thou shalt stand until the Bell be rung, that the Watchmen may take thee, and do with thee according to the Law. His Wife answered, my Lord, why do you lay that to me? For in very truth, the cause of my being abroad was for no ill, but I was by my Mothers Maid fetched in the night; and when I saw you sleep so sweetly I durst not awake you, because you are old, and therefore I took the keys and went to

my

my Mother who is sore sick, that I fear to morrow she must be anointed, or annihilled: Notwithstanding, because I would not you offend I have hasted again unto you, and have left her lying in great pain; therefore I pray you for the love of God, let me in before the Bell ringeth. The Knight answered, ye shall not come in, you must abide there until the Bell ringeth, and until the Watchmen come and take you: then said she, that would be to you, and to me, and unto all our friends and kindred a great shame, therefore for the reverence of Almighty God, let me in. Then said he, have in thy mind, evil and falle Wife, how oftentimes thou hast forsaken my Bed, and done Adultery: it is much better thou suffer shame, and bewail for thy sins here in this World, than to suffer pain in Hell. She said again to him, I pray you for the love of him that was crucified, and dyed on the Crois, have mercy on me. The Knight said thou labourest in vain, for thou shalt tarry the coming of the Watchmen. She hearing that, said, My Lord, ye know by this dor standeth a Well, if you let me not come in, I shall here drown my self, rather than all my friends should be ashamed for me: Then said he, would to God thou hadst been drowned long before thou camest in my Bed. As they thus spake, the Moon went down, and all was very dark: Then it said he, it will be no otherwise,

wife I shall drown my self; but yet before, like a true Christian Woman, I shall make my Testament: First, I bequeath to God my soul, and my body to be buried in the Church of St. Peter: and all other things and goods that God hath sent me, I give you, to dispose for my soul after your discretion. And when she had thus said, she went unto the Well, and there lying a great stone, with both her Arms she lift up, and said, Now I drown my self, and so cast the

stone down into the Well, and went again privily and stood by the door. The Knight hearing the noise cryed with a very loud voice, Alas, alas! my sweet Wife is drowned, and hastily came down, and ran to the Well. And when she saw the door open, presently she entred, and

locke

locked the doꝛ and went up into the Chamber, and lay and loked out of the Window. The Knight stod by the Well, and wept bitterly, and said, wo to me, I have now lost my best beloved Wife: cursed be the time that I made fast this doꝛ against her. When the Lady heard that, she said, O thou cursed and old Greyard, Why standest thou here at this time of the night? Was not my body sufficient? Wherefoꝛe do you go thus every night to your Harlots and leave my bed? as he heard the voice of his Wife, he was right glad and said, blessed be God that yet she is not dꝛowned: But my good Lady, wherefoꝛe do you lay such things against me? I thought to have chastised you, and therefoꝛe I locked the doꝛ, but in no ways I intended to your peril: ye know well what soꝛrow I made foꝛ you, when I heard you fall into the Well, and therefoꝛe I came, thinking to have helped you. Whereupon she said, thou liest, I never committed such faults as thou layest to me, but it appeareth by a common Pꝛoverb, he that is guilty oꝛ culpable himself of a sin, judgeth every man to be in the same; oꝛ else, the Father never sought the Son in the Oven, except he had been therein himself. In like case conceivest thou a false surmise of me: But one thing I pꝛomise thee, thou shalt abide there till the Watchmen come, and the Bell be rung, that they may lead thee beforꝛe the Judges, to

abide

abide and ſuffer the Law. Then ſaid the Knight, wherefore lay you ſuch things to me that am old, impotent, and unmeet to delight in ſuch a Game: I have dwelt long in this City, and never was defamed, therefore let me in, that to me or your ſelf you do no ſhame. She ſaid, ye ſay in vain, it is better you fore-think your ſins in this World than in Hell: Have in mind what the Wiſe man ſaith, A poor man Proud, a rich man a Lyer, and an old man a Fool, God hateth: ſo be you a Fool, and Rich. What need you to ſlander me, and cannot be content when ye have the Flower of my youth at your pleaſure, but yet you run to Harlots; and therefore it is the great grace of God, that you have time to fore-think it, leſt you ſhould be damned for more ſins; therefore ſuffer ſome penance patiently. The Knight ſaid, O my beſt beloved Lady, although it be ſo, God is merciful, and asketh nothing of a ſinner, but that he amend his life, and do penance for his ſins: Now let me in, and I will make amends. She ſaid, What Devil made you ſo good a Preacher: but yet you come not in. As they thus ſpake, the bell rung: then he intreated very fervently, ſaying, now ſuffer me to come in, that I be not aſhamed for ever. She anſwered, The ringing of the Bell doth portend the health of your ſoul. And as this was ſaid, preſently came the Watchmen about the Cage;

and

and found the Knight standing in the street, and said to him, O good man, it is not good that ye stand here in this hour of the night. As she heard this voice of the Watchmen, she said, Good Fellows avenge me on that old accursed Whore-hunter; for ye know whose Daughter I am; this accursed old man is wont every night to leave my Bed, and go to his Whores; I have long forborn him, and would not complain on him to my friends, but I trusted that he would have amended his mis-rule, but it helpeth not. Therefore punish him after the Law, that all such old Dotards may take example by him. Then the Watchmen took him, and all night chastised him in Prison, and on the morrow put him on the Pillory. Now said the Master to the Emperor, Lord, have ye understood what I have said? and he said, Right well. Then said the Master, if you put to death your Son by the instigation of your Wife, it shall chance worse unto you than to the Knight.

The Emperor said, she was the worst woman that ever I heard of, that so falsly brought her Husband to shame and rebuke: I say Master, for this Example my Son shall not die this day. The Master said unto him, if you do so, you do wisely, and hereafter you shall joy: so I commit you to God, and thank you for your patient hearing, and sparing of your Son; and so he departed.

The third Complaint of the Empress, more full of cunning and sorrow than the former.

WHen the Empress heard the Child was not dead, she wept bitterly, and enter'd her Privy Chamber, and tore her skin with her nails, and with a loud voice cryed, Alas, that ever I was born, that so great a Kings Daughter should be thus intreated and shamed, and can have no Remedy. Her Gentlewomen hearing this, went and shewed it to the Emperor, and he went unto her, and comforted her, saying, O Lady, weep not so, for it behoveth you not. ¶ Who answered, the love that I owe unto you, maketh me more sorrow than the contempt of Death: for why, the inward love of your heart hath hitherto prohibited me, that I have not returned into my Countrey to my Father: but I fear, should I do so, it might turn to your harm; for he is mighty to honour me with Riches, and to revenge my quarrel in such wise as you might repent it. ¶ Whereunto said the Emperor, let that pass out of your mind, nor repent it any more, for as long as I live I shall never fail you. And she said, Lord, I pray God you may long live: but I fear it may happen to you, as it befel to a Knight and his Son, that would not bury his Fathers head in the Church-yard, yet his Father died for him. Then said the Emperor, shew me the Example, that he

would not bury his Fathers head; she said, I shall do it for your profit.

The Third Example of the Empress.

IN the City of Rome there was a Knight, which had two daughters and one son. This Knight had such a delight in Hunting, Justing, and Tourney, that all things he might win and get in, he spent thereupon. In that time lived an Emperor named Octavian, which in Riches of Gold and Silver excæded other Kings and Princes, insomuch that he had a Tower full of Gold, and ordained a Knight to have the keeping and charge thereof. This Knight by Hunting, Justing, and other idle Games, came to so great poverty, that he was forced, out of the extremity of his adverse Fortunes, to sell his Heritage; and called unto him his Son, and said, my Son it behoveth me of your counsel, for necessity compelleth me to sell my Heritage, or else to find some other way whereby I may live; for if I should sell mine Heritage, you and your Sisters would perish. Then the Son said, Father, if you can find any manner of means, without selling your Heritage, I should be ready to help you. The Father said, I have thought on a good counsel: The Emperor hath a great Tower full of Gold; by night-time, let us with Instruments dig and hew through the Tower, and let us take of the Gold

Gold as much as ſhall ſuffice us. Whereunto the Son anſwered, that counſel cannot be amended: for it is better of the Emperors Gold to take (to help us) than to ſell our Heritage.

So they aroſe in the night, and went to the Tower, and with Inſtruments made an hole thorow the Wall, and tok as much Gold as they could both carry away at that time. And the Knight paid his Debts, and haunted again Juſts as he did before, until all was conſumed. In the mean while the Kæper of the Treaſure went into the Tower; and when he ſaw the Treaſure ſtoln, and a great hole made thorow the wall, he began to wax ſore afraid, and went unto the Emperor, and ſhewed what had befel. To whom the Emperor ſaid, all angry, What

nèeds thou to shew me that? Have I not delivered to thée my Treasure? Therefore of thée I will ask it. Anon as the Keeper heard that, he went to the Tower again, and set before the hole a great Vessel full of Pitch melted, with other Gins of subtlety, that no man might come in at the hole, but he must nèeds fall into that Vessel; and if had therein fell, he could no more come out of it. Not long after the Knight had all the Gold consumed and spent, and went again with his Son to steal more Gold: And as the Father went in first, anon he was fallen into the Vessel full of Pitch, to the neck: and when he saw he was taken, and could not get out, he said to his Son, follow me not, for if thou dost, thou canst not escape by any means. Then said the Son, God defend that I should not help you; for if you are found, we are all dead, and if you may not be holpen by me, I shall seek counsel how you may be delivered. The Father said, there is no other counsel, but with thy Sword smite off my Head, and as my Body is found without an Head, no man shall know me; and so thou and my Daughters may escape this worldly shame and death. The Son said, Father, ye have given the best counsel: For if it were so, that any man might perceive any knowledge of you, none of us all shall escape death; and it is expedient that your Head be smitten off.

Anon

Anon he drew out his Sword, and smote off his Fathers head, and cast it into a Pit, and then went and shewed unto his Sisters all the matter; who many days after privily bewailed the death of their Father. After this the Keeper of the Treasury came into the Tower, and found a Body without a Head; whereas he wondred sore, and shewed it unto the Emperor: to whom he said, Bind the Body to the Tail of an Horse, and so draw him thorow all the streets of the City, and diligently take good heed if ye hear any cry or weeping: wheresoever ye do hear that, he was Lord of the House; take all them and the Body, draw them to the Gallows and hang them. The which the Emperors Servants fulfilled according to his Commandment. And as they came against the House of the dead Knight, the Daughters seeing the Body of their dead Father, made a marvellous great shriek and wept piteously. And as their Brother heard that, he wounded himself with a Knife, so that great plenty of Blood came out of his wound: The Officers when they heard the cry, entred the House, and demanded the cause of their clamour. Then answered the Son, They lament because I am thus wounded; for when my Sisters saw the Blood so abundantly go out, as you see, they began to weep and cry: and when the Officers saw the wound, they believed his words, and so went and

hang'd the Knights Body upon the Gallows, where he hung a long time, and his Son would neither take his Body down from the Gallows, nor yet bury his Head. The Empress said, understand ye what I have said: the Emperor said right well.

The Declaration of the Example.

Then spake the Empress thus, My Lord, I fear it will so chance to you and to your Son, the Knight for the love of his Son was made poor, and first he committed Theft, and brake the Tower: secondly, caused himself to be beheaded, that his Children should have no shame. After the Son cast his head into the Dike and buried it not, neither in the Church nor Church-yard; and his body he suffered to hang still on the Gallows; if he could not have taken it down in the day, he might well have done it in the night. In the same manner ye labour night and day, that ye may promote your Son to Honour and Riches, but without doubt he laboureth for your destruction, that he may reign after you in your Empire. Therefore I advise you speedily to take away his life, who living would suddenly prove the destruction of yours. The Emperor said, you have shewed me a good Example. The Knights Son, when he had smitten off his Fathers head, would not bury it: without doubt my Son shall not do so

to me. Then anon he commanded his Officers that they should lead him to the Gallows, and they all obeyed his commaundment hastily. As they led him through the Streets the people made a great noise and lamentation, crying, Alas, alas, the only Son of the Emperor is led again towards the Gallows; and as they led him, the third Master named Craton, came riding upon an Horse: and as the Child saw him, he bowed down his head to him, and as though he had said, have mind upon me. The people cryed, saying, O good Master make haste and save your Disciple: so he smote his Horse with his Spurs, and hasted to the Palace. And when he came before the Emperor, he honourably saluted him; who said, thy coming hither shall nothing avail thee, for I think it long until I be avenged on thee. The Master replyed, I hoped at my coming to have been welcome, and to have had a better reward, and not so to be rebuked. The Emperor said, as ye have deserved, so shall it be to you. To whom he said, my Lord, what have I deserved? The Emperor said, ye right well deserve death; for I delivered you my Son well speaking, and well manner'd, to be informed and taught, and ye have delivered him again unto me dumb, and a Ribauld. To which the Master answered: in that you say he is dumb, that I commit to God; For he maketh

the dumb to speak, and deaf to hear: But in that you say he would have inforced your Wife, that should I gladly know, if any creature hath seen that: for there is no malice above the malice of a woman, and that I shall prove by a good Example, that a woman is full of falshood and unknown deceit: and if you put to death your Son for the words of your wife, it shall happen unto you as it did to a Noble-man and his Wife, and his Pye, which he loved marvelously. To whom the Emperor said, I pray you tell me how that women are full of malice and leasings, who said, I shall not shew it; but if you will first call again your Son from death, then at your pleasure I shall shew the Example. Then the Emperor made his Son to be called again and put in Prison. And the Master began to tell the Example in manner following.

The Example of the third Master.

THere was in a City a rich Burgess that had a Pye, which he loved so well, that every day he taught her to speak Latin and Hebrew; and when he had learned her perfectly to speak these two languages, all that she saw and heard, she shewed and told her Master.

This young man had a fair young Wife, as ye have, the which he loved full well, but she on the contrary loved him not, because he was not of that lascivious performance, to answer her

Lusts

Lusts according to her desires: Therefore she had another young man, that she loved above her husband: and always as her Husband was out of Town, about his Merchandize and other business, she sent for her best beloved, that they might make good cheer together. The

Pye as she espyed that, told it to her Master at his coming home, in such a manner as the noise ran all over the City of her Adultery; wherefore her Husband many times brawled and chid with her; she answered him, ye believe your cursed Pye, which as long as she liveth, will alway make betwixt us variance and discord: and he said the Pye cannot lye; for what she seeth and heareth, that she telleth me, and therefore I believe her more than you.

It

It fortuned that this man went into a far Countrey about his Merchandize, and as soon as he was gone, his Wife sent for her Friend and Love, to solace and make good chéer with him: but he durst not come by day-light, but abode until the Evening, lest he should be séen of the people: and when the Night was come, he knocked at the Gate, and she was ready and opened it. He said, I fear that the cursed Pye shall accuse me; for by her is come great slander upon us thorough all the City, Enter in, she said, boldly and fear not. As they should pass thorow the Hall, where the Pye was in her Cage, she heard him say these words, O my most beloved, I fear me greatly, lest that the Pye should betray us: and as the Wife heard that, she said, be still fool, it is dark, she may not sée you. Then the Pye hearing that, said, if I sée thée not I hear thy voice, and thou dost wrong to my Master, for thou slépest with my Mistres; and when my Master cometh, I shall tell him. The young man hearing that, said, told I not you, that the Pye would discover us: and the Wife said, fear not, for this Night we will be avenged on the Pye, and so they entred into the Chamber, and slept together that night. About mid-night the Wife arose, and called her Maid, and said, fetch me a Ladder, and set it up to the roof of the Houle, that I may avenge me on the Pye. The Maid did so, and

and they went both up, and made a hole through the covering of the House right over the Pye, and there threw cast Sand, Clay, Stones, and Water upon the Pye, insomuch that the poor Pye was almost dead. And on the morrow the young man went out early at the back Door. When the good man was come home, as his custom was, he went and visited the Pye, and said to her, O Pye, my beloved Bird, tell me how thou hast fared the while I have been out. She said, Master, I will tell you tidings that I have heard: your Wife as soon as you were gone, by the night time she let a man come in; and as soon as I heard that, I told him that I should shew it you at your coming home; yet she led him into her Chamber, and slept with him all Night: You ask me also how I have done in your absence, and I say to you of a truth, that I was never so nigh my death, as I was that same night, with Snow, Hail, and Rain, that fell upon me so long together, that I was almost left for dead. The Wife when she heard that said to her Husband, Sir, you believe your Pye, now you may hear what she saith, she complaineth that in the same Night there fell so much Snow, Hail, and Rain, upon her, that she was almost dead: And yet there was none of them that same Night, for there was not in the year a clearer and fairer Night than it was; and therefore from henceforth believe

lieve her not. Then went the good man to his Neighbours, and asked of them if in that night were any Tempest or Rain: They answered, and some of them walked that night, and in all that year there was not seen a fairer night. Then went he to his house and said to his wife, I have found you in a truth, for the night was very fair and clear, as I understand of your Neighbours. You may now know of a truth, said she, that the Pye is a lier with her leasings, she hath sown much discord betwixt us: Moreover, I am defamed through the City by her false leasings. Then the Burgess went unto the Pye, and said, wherefore hast thou made lies betwixt me and my wife: is this the thanks I have for the meat that I was wont to give thee with mine own hands every day: and thou hast thereby brought my wife into great disgrace through all the City. The Pye answered, God knoweth I cannot lie, for that which I saw and have heard I shewed you. Then said he, thou liest, thou hast said unto me, that in the same night was hail, snow, and rain, that thou hadst near hand lost thy life, which is false, and therefore from henceforth thou shalt make no more leasings nor discord betwixt me and my wife; and so took the Pye and brake her neck.

When as the Wife saw that she was glad, and said, now thou hast done well, now may we all our days live in rest and peace. And

when

when he had slain the Pye, he lok'd up and saw in the top of his house a Ladder and a Vessel with water, sand, and stones: and when he beheld that, he perceived the falshood of his wife, and cryed with a loud voice, wo to me, that for my wifes words I have slain my Pye, and also my solace and joy is lost, the which in all things said to me truth. And as he had thus done, anon for sorrow he left his Merchandize, and all his house, and went towards the Holy Land, and never returned home again unto his wife. Then the Master said unto the Emperor, Sir, have you understood what I have said, he answered, right well. The Master said, was not this a cursed wife, that so by her falshood, deceit and cunning, caused the Pye to be slain. The Emperor said, in troth she was full of falseness: it pitteth me greatly to think upon the Pye, which for her true saying lost her life. Verily I say unto you that you have told me a very fair Example, therefore this day my Son shall not die. Then said the Master, Sir, you do wisely; and I thank you that you have spared your Son this day for my sake, and so to God I commend you.

The Fourth Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard that the Child was not dead, she made great noise, and crying in such wise, that she was heard thorow the Palace, and said, wo unto me that ever I was

was made Empress, would to God I had died when, I was first brought into these parts. When the Emperor heard that cry that she made, he entred into the Chamber, and comforted her as much as he could, and demanded the cause of her lamentation. Who said, O mine own Lord, have you no wonder, though that I be in this sorrow and agony; for I am your Wife and in your company, by your Son I am ashamed; ye saw lately the bloody marks of his inforcement upon my tender Flesh, and you have promised me, that he therefore should be hanged, and yet he liveth: wherefore should I not be sorry? The Emperor answered, be content and I shall do justice upon my Son to morrow: I forbore him yesterday, at the moving of one of his Masters by an Example. Then said she, have you forbid to do justice for one word? were it so, yet for a word ye should not let to do justice: and ye say, for the Example of one Master ye have let it. I fear me it shall happen to you and your Masters, as upon a time it fortuned unto an Emperor with his seven wise Masters. The Emperor said, I pray you tell me that Example. She said, to what intent should I labour in vain? For yesterday I shewed you a good Example and it availed not; and whatsoever I shew you for honour and profit, that the Masters of your Son turn to your destruction; as in the present

Example

Example I shall clearly shew unto you. To whom the Emperor said, O my best beloved Lady, shew me that Example, by the same I may beware; for though in my clemency I gave one days benefit of life to my Son, I shall not therefore give him his life; for what's deferred is not forgotten. She said, gladly shall I shew it to your profit, and began to tell as followeth.

The fourth Example of the Empress.

SOmetimes there was in the City of Rome, Seven Wise Masters, by whom the Empire was governed; and the Emperor that then was did never attempt any thing without the counsel of his Masters; whereupon they perceiving that the Emperor was so affected to them, that without them he would not ordain or do any thing, devised by their arts and cunning, that the Emperor should clearly see as long as he was in the Palace, but as soon as he was out, he should become blind; and so did they, that they might the more freely have the dealing themselves of all things that appertained to the Emperor; by which they won great profit and lucre of goods: and after they had wrought the experiment, they could never change it, nor undo it afterwards: But the Emperor abode still blind many years: And the Seven Masters made and proclaimed throughout the Em-

Empire, that if any man had dreamed a dream, he should come unto them with a Florent of Gold or Silver, and they will expound the interpretation of his Dream: whereby, and by other unjust means, they obtained much more substance and money of the people then the Emperor did. So upon a time, when he sat at the Table with his Empress, he began to sigh and sorrow in himself, and when she perceived that, she enquired diligently of him the cause. The Emperor said, should it not be heavy and sorrowful unto me, that I so long have been blind, and cannot see out of my Palace, and yet find no remedy: to whom spake the Empress and said, Lord hear my counsel, and it shall never repent you, if you did thereafter. In your Court you have seven Wise Masters, by whom ye and all the Empire are governed; if you mark, ye shall find they are the cause of your blindness: and if it be so, they are worthy to die a most shameful death: Therefore hear my advice; first send for them, and shew to them your infirmity, and threaten them on their lives, that they should find some speedy remedy to help you of your sickness and blindness. This Counsel pleased the Emperor well. And anon he sent for the Masters and when they were come, the Emperor shewed unto them his infirmity, and blindness, and charged them on pain of death, that they should presently seek some remedy to

eaſe him thereof. Then anſwered they, Ye deſire of us a thing that is difficult to be done thus ſhortly, but give us reſpite for two days, and we will give you your full anſwer. The Emperor was therewithal well contented. Then the Seven Wiſe Maſters went unto Counſel how they might reſtore him his ſight again, and in no wiſe could they find the means how to put away the blindneſs from the Emperor: Wherefore they were all right ſorrowful, and ſaid among themſelves, without we find a Remedy, we are all but dead Men. So they throughout all the Empire ſought if they could find any remedy or Counſel therefore. It happened upon a time going through the City, in the midſt thereof they found Children playing, and after them came a man with a Talent or Florent of Gold, and ſaid to them, God Maſters, this Night have I dreamed a Dream, the Interpretation whereof I would fain know, wherefore I pray you ſhew me what it ſignifieth, and take the Gold to you. That heard one of the Children (that played amongſt the other) who ſaid unto him, give me the Gold, and I will expound you the Dream. The man ſaid, I dreamed this night, that in the midſt of mine Orchard was a great Spring of Water, whereof came many ſmall Springs, that all mine Orchard was full, and overflown with Water. The Child ſaid, take a

Spade, and dig in the same place where you thought that the water sprung out, and there shall ye find a hoard of Gold, so great, that you and your Children, and Lineage, shall be forever rich. The Man did as the Child had shewed to him, and found the Treasure. Then went the Man to the Child, and meted him a pound weight of the Gold that he had found, for the interpretation of the Dream; but he would receive none, but committed him to the Prayers of the Man. The Seven Wise Masters, when they heard the Child had so wisely expounded the Dream, they said to him, good Child, what is your name? He answered, I am called Merlin. Then said the Masters, we see surely great wisdom in you; we shall shew you a great matter, of which we would gladly find a remedy. The Child said, shew me your matter. And they said, the Emperor of Rome, as long as he is in the Palace, hath his sight very clear without any impediment; but as soon as he is gone out of the Palace, he cannot see. Now if you can find the cause thereof, and give present remedy, whereby he may be eased and have his sight, ye shall have a great Reward and Honour of the Emperor. Then answered the Child, I know as well the cause of the blindness as the Remedy. Then said all unto him, come with us unto the Emperor and you shall be rewarded so largely, that ye shall

be

be pleased; to whom the Child said, I am ready to go with you, and when they came with the Child before the Emperor, they said unto him, Lord, lo here is the Child we have brought which shall fulfil your desire, touching the cause of your blindness, and the recovery of your sight. The Emperor said, God Masters will you take it upon you, that the Child will perform it? They all said, yea, for we are expert in his wisdom. The Emperor turned himself towards the Child, and said, Will you undertake to tell me the cause of my blindness, and the remedy? the Child answered, my Lord the Emperor, lead me into your Bed-chamber, and there I will shew you what is to be done; and as he was therein brought, he said to his Servants, take the Cloaths from off the Bed, and all the apparel, and you shall see wonders; that done, they saw a Well smoaking that had seven Springs and Flows; which when the Emperor saw, he marvelled greatly: the Child said, ye see this Well, and without it be quenched ye shall never have your sight. The Emperor said, how may that be? the Child said, but one way: the Emperor said, shew us the means, and if it be possible it shall be done, that I may recover my sight as well without as within. To whom the Child said, My Lord, the seven Springs of this Well, are the Seven Wise Masters, who hitherto have traiterously governed you

and your Empire, and have made you blind as ye be without your Palace, that they your Subjects by extortion might pill and pole, you not seeing it. But they know not the Remedy: therefore hear now my Counsel, and this Well

shall be quenched and extinct: Strike off the first Masters Head, and anon you shall see the first Spring quencht, and so by order one after another till they are all beheaded, and anon all the Springs with the Well shall be quenched, and ye shall have your sight, as ye had before: and when this was done, the Well with the seven Springs was vanished. And as the Emperor had his sight again, he made the Child a great Lord, and gave him great abundance of goods. Then spake the Empress, My Lord,

have

have ye well perceived this Example, that I have told you? and he said, yea, in the best wise, and ye have recited a worthy and good Example. Then said she, in the same manner your Seven Wise Masters intend to do with you with their false Narration, that your Son may reign over your Empire, which God forbid.

The Declaration of the Example.

THis Well is your Son, whereout floweth seven springs, that signifieth the seven wise Masters: which Son you may not destroy, without the seven Wise Masters be brought to nought: that done, this Well, that is your Son, with all his wiles, shall not escape, but let him taste of death, (which befits his shameful deserts, lest he have a help of his Masters) and after consequently the Seven Masters, and so you shall govern and guide your Empire in peace and rest. The Emperor anon commanded his Servants to lead his Son to the Gallows, which they were loath to do. Then a great multitude of people gathered with great noise and bewailing, so that the fourth Master, named Malquidrake heard thereof, who leapt upon his Horse and hasted to the Palace, where he met with his Disciple, and commended him unto him; and when he came before the Emperor, and did his obeysance, the Emperor said, little

thanks shall you have you old cursed Catif, for so ill teaching my Son; I delivered you thy Son well speaking, and in all things right vertuous; but you have sent him home a Fool, dumb and a Ribauld, for he would have lain with my Wife by force: and therefore all ye forthwith shall be hang'd. Then said the Master, my Lord, I have not deserved so ill of you, God knoweth why your Son speaketh not; in short time you shall perceive other things, but the time is not yet come: you say he would have oppressed your Wife, that is not truth nor proved; for neither for one single person should you judge your Son to death; if for the Words of your Wife you judge your Son to die, it shall be worse to you than to a certain old man and his Wife, and that I shall well prove. To whom the Emperor said, I think you do with me, as sometimes seven wise men did to an Emperor. Whereupon said the Master, the offence of one, nor of twenty may not sound to the rebuke of all other: but one thing of a truth I shall shew you, that evil shall come to you, if ye this day put your Son to death for the words of your Wife, of which I could shew a notable Example. Then said the Emperor, recite it. The Master said, if you will call your Son from death, then will I rehearse the Example or else not. The Emperor commanded he should be called again;

again: and desired the Master to say as hereafter followeth.

The Example of the fourth Master.

THere was an old Knight, and a right wise man that lived long without Wife or Child: His Friends oftentimes exhorted him to take a Wife.

The Knight thus councelled by his Friends, at last agréed unto them, and they gave him to Wife the Daughter of the Provost of Rome, that was rich and comely of feature; whom when he saw he began to love marvellously well; and when he had béen married a certain space and had no Child, in the morning it happened that she went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, who said, My Daughter, how pleaseth you your Marriage and your Husband? She said, right vile, for you have given me an old lame man, to my discontentment in all respects, and I would you had the same time buried me; for I had rather lye and eat with the Swine, than with him, therefore I may no longer thus endure, but I must needs love another. Then said the Mother: God forbid my dear Daughter: How long have I béen with your Father, and yet never medled with such foolishness? The Daughter said, it is no marvel, for you both met in

your youth together, and the one took solace of the other, but I can of him receive no manner of corporal pleasure, for he is cold, and on the Bed he lieth as still as a stone, or as a thing immoveable. The Mother answered: If you love another, tell me what he is. The Daughter said I will love a Priest; to whom the Mother said, it were better and less sin for you to love a Knight or Squire: She said, in short time he would be weary of me, and after do me shame, and so will not the Priest; for he will kæp his own honour and counsel, as well as mine: and Spiritual men be more true to their Lovers then Secular men be. The Mother said, hear my counsel, it will be for your good: old folks are wilely and fell; tempt your Husband first, and if you escape him without doing you harm or smiting, then love the Priest. The Daughter said, I may not so long abide: the Mother said, upon my blessing abide till you have proved. The Daughter said, upon your blessing I will abide till I have attempted: But first tell me how I shall prove him: the Mother said, he hath in his Orchard a Trée which he loveth much, cause it to be smitten down while he is a hunting, and against his coming home, make him a fire therewith; and if he forgive you, then love the Priest. As she heard the counsel of her Mother she went home: to whom her Husband said, where have

you

you bèen so long? She answered, I have bèen at the Church, where I met with my Mother, and with her I have had a little talk: and so began properly to dissemble. After mid-day the Knight rode forth to hunt, then she thinking upon the counsel of her Mother, went to the Gardiner and said, cut down this young Trée newly planted, that I may make a fire thereof to warm my Lord withal, at his coming from Hunting, for it is a great wind, sharp and cold. The Gardiner said, Madam, that I will not do, for my Lord loveth this Trée better than he

doth all the other Trées, nevertheless I shall gather wood enough to make a good fire, but in any case this I will not hew down. As she heard that, then boldly she took the Ax from the Gardiner,

diner and hewed down the Tree her self, and made the Gardiner with others to bear it home. At Evening when her Lord came from Hunting, he was very cold, and she made a great fire and went to meet him, and set him a stool before the fire to warm him; and as he a little while had sitten, he perceived the odour of the fire, and called the Gardiner, and said, I smell by this odour that the new Plant burneth in the fire: The Gardiner said, Lord it is true, my Lady your Wife hath felled it down. The Knight said unto her, God forbid that my Plant should be cut down by you. She answered anon, Lord I have done it, knowing the weather and you also cold, and therefore I have ordained this fire for your comfort. And as the Knight heard that, he loked angerly upon her, and said, O cursed woman, how wast thou so obdurate relentless, and void of pity, as to hew down so gentle a young Tree, the which thou knowest it well, that I loved it above all my other Trees: When he had so said, she began to weep and excuse her self, and said, my Lord, I have done it for your good, and do you take it grievously: and began to cry, wo, wo be to me. Anon as the Knight saw the weeping of his Wife and heard the cause, he was moved with pity, and said unto her, cease your weeping and beware how you anger me any more, or trouble me in any thing I love. The next day early

in

in the morning she went again to the Churchyard, and met with her Mother coming home, and they saluted each other. Then the Daughter said unto the Mother; O dear Mother, I will love the Priest, for I have attempted my Lord, as you counselled me, but all for nought, for anon he forgave it, when he saw me a little weep. Then said the Mother, though old men for one time forgive, they double the pain another time, and therefore I counsel you, that you yet once again tempt him. Then said the Daughter I may no longer abide, for I suffer so much pain for the love of the Priest, that with my tongue I cannot tell it, therefore you shall pardon me, I will no more follow your counsel. Then said the Mother: for the love that the Child should have unto the Mother, attempt him yet once more for your Fathers blessing; and then if you go quietly without harm or beating, love the Priest in the name of God. Then answered the Daughter, it is to me great pain so long to abide; nevertheless for the blessing of my Father, I will once more attempt him: But tell me how I shall begin. The Mother said, I understand that he hath a little Hound that he loveth well and kæpeth on his bed, cast the Hound with great might (before his face) against the wall that it die, and if you escape without a stripe, or he forgive it lightly, then in the name of God love the Priest: The

Daughte

Daughter said, I will in all things do after your counsel, for there is no Daughter living at this day, that would more gladly have the blessing of Father and Mother than I: and so she bad her Mother farewel, and went home again; and that day with great trouble of her heart she brought to the night: and when the night was come, she commanded the Bed to be covered with Purple and Cloth of Gold, whilst the Knight sat by the fire; and when the Bed was made ready, the little Hound as he was accustomed leapt upon the Bed, and she took him by the hinder legs, and with a malicious heart she cast him against the Wall, that it lay still dead. When the good old Knight saw that, he was marvellous angry, and said with a loud voice to his Wife, O thou most cruel and spightful of all wicked Women, how couldst thou find in thine Heart to kill that gentle Hound, that I loved so much? Lord, said she, have you not seen how he with his feet (coming out of the mire) bewrayed our Bed that is so preciously covered with rich Cloaths. And the Knight said with much anger: Know you not that I loved much better my little Hound than the Bed? When she heard that, she began pitiously to weep, and said, Wo be to me that ever I was born, for all things that I do for the best, are turned to the worst. The Knight out of the treasure of his pity would

not

not suffer the weeping of his Wife, but for that he loved her so well, said unto her, cease your weeping, for I forgive it you altogether; and I counsel you, beware how you displease me from henceforth: And so they went to Bed together.

Upon the morrow very early she went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, to whom, when she had done Reverence, as it behoved her, she said, Mother, now will I love the Priest, for I have attempted my Husband the second time, and all things he hath suffered. The Mother said, O my dear Daughter, there's no cruelty or falshood above the cruelty of old Folks, and therefore once more prove him. To whom the Daughter answered: Mother you labour in vain; for if you wist what, and how much pain I suffered for the Priest's love, you should help me if you love me. The Mother said, hear me Daughter this time, and I shall never let you more: think how you have sucked Milk out of my Breasts, and the great pain I suffered at your Birth: by these pains, my dear Daughter, I charge you, deny not this good Petition, and I promise you no more to let you, nor hinder you of your content, but rather to help you. Then answered the Daughter, it is to my great pain to abstain so long from the love of the Priest: Nevertheless for the great charge you have laid to me, and for

that

that ye have made a Vow no more to let me, but to further me: tell me how I might attempt him, and I shall once more adventure. The Mother said, I know on Sunday next he intendeth to have us all to Dinner, your Father and I, and all your friends, with all the rest of the City, and when you are set in your place, and all the Meats are brought and served upon the Table, fasten your keys privily, that hang at your Girdle, in the Table-Cloth, and then feign to have forgotten your Knife, and say these words openly: See what a short wit I am off, I have forgotten my knife in my Chamber! And then rise up hastily, and go, and the Cloth with all the Meats you shall overthrow upon the ground, and if you escape without pain, I make a Vow to God, I shall never let you after. The Daughter said, that shall I gladly do, and so took her leave and departed. The Feast day came, and all (as the Mother said) was bid, the Servants covered the Table, all were set, and the Daughter set over against her Lord; and when the Table was well served with Meats, and other things belonging, the Lady of the House said with a loud voice: See how forgetful I am, I have left my knife in my Chamber, which I must fetch: And so rose up hastily and drew the Cloth with all the meat upon it with her, and all the Gold Vessels and the Salts fell upon the ground. The Knight

waxed

waxed sore angry in heart, but dissembling before the Guests, and commanded another Cloth and other Meats to be brought; and with joy saluted his Guests to eat and make good chear, so that they were all merry. The Feast, or Dinner done, they all gave thanks to the Knight and took their leaves, every man towards his own House. Upon the next day, in the morning, the Knight rose early, and went to the Church to hear Service; after which, he went to the Barber and said unto him, Sir, are you expert in blood-letting, in what vein I will desire you? And he saith, Sir I am expert in what vein you can name in a Mans Body. The Knight said, I am content, come with me. And when he was come into the House, he entred his Chamber where his wife lay in bed, and said unto her, rise up quickly. Then said she, what shall I do up so early, it is not nine of the Clock? The Knight said you must rise up, for you must be letten blood in both your Arms. She said I was never letten blood, and shall I now bleed? then said the Knight, that is truth, and therefore you are a Fool: Remember, first, you hewed down my Tree, another time you killed my little Hound: and but yesterday you shamed me before all my Friends and Parents. If I should suffer thou thus for to go on, you would forever shame me. The cause hereof I consider, you

have

have evil and wild blood within your body, and therefore I will that the corrupt blood be drawn out, that ye from henceforth shall put me to no more shame and anger: so caused to be made a great fire, and she stood and cryed, and held up her hands towards Heaven, and said, My Lord, forgive my trespass, and have pity on me at this time, and I will never more offend you. The Knight said, pray for no mercy, for the mercy that God hath wrought towards thée at this present, is this, that except thou holdest thine Arm straight, I shall soon have thy hearts blood; and said to the Barber, smite hard and make a déep hole in her Arm, or I shall give you a great stripe: then smote the Barber so sore, that the blood came abundantly out, and the Knight would not suffer him to stench it, until the time that she changed her colour in her Visage; and as this was done, he bad it to be stopped; and willed the Barber to smite the vein upon the other Arm: Then she cryed with a very loud voice, my swéet Husband I pray have compassion on me, for now I die. The Knight answered, Wife you should have thought on this before, ere you had done to me thése three despites. Then she held out her left Arm, and the Barber smote thereon a great hole, that the blood came out right ugly: and he suffered her to bléed till her Visage was changed, and she swouned: Then said the

Knight

Knight now unbind her Arm, and ſtench it; and ſaid unto her, now go to bed and ſtudy, and think henceforth to amend your life, or I ſhall draw the blod of your heart. As this was done he gave the Barber his Reward, and he went again to his own Houſe, and his Wife being under the hands of her Maids, almoſt dead, was led to her bed: ſhe made one of her Maidens go to her Mother in haſte, and ſay, that I deſire her to come and ſpeak with me before I die: the Mother when ſhe heard that, was glad of the correction of her Daughter, and came haſtily to her. When the Daughter heard her Mother, ſhe ſaid, O my ſweet Mother, I am almoſt dead, for I have bled ſo much that I believe I ſhall not eſcape death. Then anſwered the Mother, ſaid I not that old men are right cruel; will ye now love the Prieſt? She ſaid, the Devil may the Prieſt confound, I will never love other but my Husband. Then ſaid the Maſter to the Emperor, Lord have you underſtood me: He anſwered right well, for amongſt all I have heard, this was the beſt Example. Three evil deeds ſhe did to her Husband; and I doubt not, if ſhe had done the fourth, ſhe would have ſhamed him for ever. Then ſaid the Maſter, therefore I counſel you, that you beware of your Wife, leſt it happen worſe to you, which appears manifeſtly in this Example, if you put to death your only Son for her words,

you shall be deceived in the end, and for ever shall repent it. The Emperor said, truly Master this day my Son shall not die. The Master said, my Lord, I thank you, that you for my sake this day have spared your only Son.

The fifth Complaint of the Empress.

The Empress hearing the Child was not dead, forthwith apparelled her self, and caused the Wains to be in readiness, as though she would have gone unto her own Countrey to her Father, to complain of the great shame that was done her, and yet could have no remedy. The Servants seeing that, shewed to the Emperor, that the Empress was going into her Countrey: When he perceived that, he went to her, saying, whither are you going? I hoped you had loved me, so that in all the World you would have sought no solace but with me. To which she said, that is true, and therefore I go from you, for I had rather hear of your death than see you die: You delight so much to hear these Masters, that it shall happen to you as it did to Octavian the Emperor, the which was so covetous, that the Noblemen of the Empire buried him quick, and filled his mouth full of molten Gold. The Emperor said, dear Wife do not so, that the blame on you and me be not laid. Then said the Empress truly Sir, the blame is yours, for have you not promised me

many

many times your Son ſhall die, yet he liveth; therefore I will no more believe. Then ſaid the Emperor, it becometh not a King every cauſe lightly to diſcuſs without great advice, eſpecially upon his Son; on whom it is not meet, but upon deliberation and good counſel to paſs judgment: Therefore I pray you tell me ſomewhat by which I may govern my life, for it is the deſtruction of a King, without advice, and undiſcreetly to give judgment. She anſwered, I will gladly tell you a notable Example, ſo that henceforth you will not be deſirous to hear the Maſters; and began in this form following.

The fifth Example of the Empreſs.

OCtavianus the Emperor reigned in Rome, right rich and covetous, and above all things he loved Gold. The Citizens of Rome at that time did much harm, and many great outrages to other Nations, inſomuch that divers Regions were moved againſt the Romans. In that time was Maſter Virgilius, the which excelled in Magick and other Sciences all other Maſters: the Citizens prayed him that by his Art he would deviſe, how they of their Enemies might have warning beforehand, whereby they might provide for themſelves the better. And he made by his cunning

a Tower, and on the Tower did cause to be set as many Images as in all the World were Regions and Provinces, and in the midst of the Tower an Image, which held in his hand an Apple, or a great round Ball of Gold, and every Image of the Tower held in his hand a little Bell, and stood turning and loking towards his own Province to him assigned: and as often as any Province would rebel against the Romans, so often turned he to the Images of the Land, and rung the Bell; that hearing, the Citizens of Rome armed themselves, and so that Province hasted with all their might the same to subdue: so there was no Land so great that could wreak them upon the Romans, and therefore were they feared over all the World. Also that Master Virgil made for the comfort of the poor people a light that always burned; and by that light he made to Bathes, the one of them hot, in which the poor people might bathe, and wash themselves: and the other cold, in which they might themselves refresh. Betwixt the Light and the Bathes, he made an Image, standing, in whose fore-head was written, He that smiteth me, shall anon have vengeance. The Image stood there many years, and at last came a Clerk, and beheld the Image, and read the writing, and thought in himself, what vengeance he might find; therefore I do believe better, if any man smite thee, and thou fallest therewith

to the earth, he shall find some Treasure under thy feet; and therefore is the Writing, that no man should have it. And the Clerk lift up his hand and gave the Image a great stroak, that it fell to the ground: and anon the Light was out, and the Bathes were vanished away, and he found no Treasure. The poor Folks perceiving that, were all sorrowful, and laid their curses and complaints upon him, that for his singular Covetousness had destroyed the Image, and robbed them of so great a Solace. Hereafter assembled three Kings, which by the Romans had suffered great wrongs, and went to take counsel how they might be avenged of the Romans; and some of them said, we labour in vain, for as long as there standeth the Tower with the Images, we cannot do any thing against them.

At the Counsel arose four Knights, and said, We have thought on a remedy how to destroy the Tower with the Images, and that to do, we will lay our lives to pledge, if you will be at the cost. Then answered the Kings, what cost shall we be at: they answered, Four Tun of Gold. Then said the Kings, take the Gold, and fulfil your promise. The Knights took the Gold, and went towards Rome: and when they came thither in the night, without one of the Gates, in the Ditch full of Water, they drowned one of the Tuns with the Gold

in it, and another Tun they drowned by the second gate, and the third Tun they drowned by the third gate, and the fourth Tun by the fourth gate; and when they had thus done, early in the morning they entered into the City at an hour convenient: and as the Emperor went over to the Market they did him reverence. The Emperor seeing them, demanded from whence they were, of what Science, and what service they could do. They answered, we are all of far Countries, and Southsayers, so perfect, that there is never a thing so privily hid, but we shall find it out by our Dreams. We have heard that ye labour and have pleasure in such things, and therefore we come unto you to know if you have need of our service: the Emperor said I will prove you; and if it be, that I find you true, you shall have of me great rewards and thanks. They said, we ask nothing but the half of the Gold which by us shall be found: the Emperor said I am well content. And thus they had with the Emperor many words. At night when the Emperor was going to bed, they said unto him, My Lord, if it please you, this night shall the eldest of us set his Cunning awork and Dream: The third day he shall shew you his Dream, and what it signifieth. The Emperor said, go in Gods Name. And they went forth with great gladness; and this Night they passed with great joy

and

and mirth, upon truſt they ſhould come to a good purpoſe. When the third day was come, they went early to the Emperor; the firſt ſaid, my Lord pleaſe you to go with us without one of the Gates of the City, and I will ſhew where there is a Tun full of Gold hid; the Emperor ſaid, I ſhall go with you and ſee if it be true that you ſay. And when they were come to the place, they drew out the Tun, that they before there had put; the Emperor when he ſaw that, was glad and gave them their part. Then ſaid the ſecond Dreamer: My Lord, this night I ſhall Dream; then the Emperor ſaid, God give you a good Dream; the next night came, and he took out the other Tun and gave it to the Emperor, & took alſo his ſhare. In the like manner the third and the fourth; upon which the Emperor was out of all meaſure joyous, and ſaid, he had not ſeen ſuch true and expert Southſayers, or Dreamers as they were. Then ſaid they all of them together, as it had been out of one mouth, my Lord, we have all one after another dreamed, the which you have ſeen, they be all proved: but now if it pleaſe you that we dream altogether this night, we truſt that to us ſhall be ſhewed, that we ſhall find a great quantity of Gold and Riches. The Emperor ſaid, God give you a good Dream, which to me and you may be profitable. On the next morrow they came again unto the Emperor, and ſaid unto

him with countenance full of joy, My Lord, we bring good and profitable tidings; for this night in our sleeps, so great a Treasure is to us shewed, the which if you will suffer it to be sought, you shall be so inriched, that in this World none shall be like unto you. The Emperor said, where shall we find this Treasure? they said, under the Foundation of the Tower that the Images stand upon. The Emperor answered, God defend I should for love of Gold, destroy the Tower with the Images, wherewith we from our Enemies be defended and warned. They said to him again, my Lord, have you found us in our sayings otherwise than true? The Emperor said, nay: O Lord (said they) we with our own hands shall give out the Gold, without hurting the Tower, or the Images. And it is expedient (that secretly in the night) by us it be done, for dread of resort and concourse of the people, lest that it should run in the clamour of them, and they take that good Gold away from you and us, The Emperor said go in the Name of God, and do your best as you will, or can, and I shall to morrow early come to you. Then went they with gladness, and in the night were let into the Tower, and then with great haste and diligence they undermind it, and on the next day, very early in the morning, mounted upon their Horses, and rode again towards their

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own Country with joy and glory; and ere they came without the sight of Rome, the Tower fell down on the morning ensuing. When it was fallen, and the Senators it perceived, they sorrowed greatly, and there was a great bewailing throughout all the City; and they went unto the Emperor, and said, Lord how may it be that this Tower is thus fallen, by the which we have always had warning afore of our enemies? he answered and said, to me came four false deceivers, and feigned themselves to be South-sayers, and that they could find Treasure in the ground, and said, that under the foundation of the Tower was hidden an innumerable sum of Gold, the which they should undermine without hurting the Tower and Images: I gave faith to them, and they have deceived me. They answered, ye have coveted so much Gold, that for your unsatiate covetousnes we shall all be destroyed: but first your covetousnes shall fall upon your self. Then they took him and led him to the Capitol, and laid him on his back, and poured his mouth full of molten Gold; saying to him, you have desired Gold, and therefore you shall drink Gold: and after that they buried him quick. Not long after that came the Enemy against the Romans, and overcame and destroyed them all.

Then said the Empress unto the Emperor,

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have ye, my Lord, this Example well understood, and he said, right well: then said she, the Tower with Images, is your Body with five wits; as long as you live there is none so hardy to trouble or to make War upon you, nor upon your People; that hath your Son right well understood, and doth with the seven Masters and their false Narrations or Fables, seek how they might destroy you; for you are overmuch covetous to encline to them, insomuch that they shall undermine you and cast you under foot, and bring you to nought; the Images are your five Wits that be all lost. And forasmuch as you be foolish they shall destroy you, and your Son shall obtain your Empire.

The Emperor said, ye have recited a good Example; wherefore it shall not happen to me as to the Tower, but my Son first this day shall taste the bitterness of death. To whom the Empress said, if ye do so, ye shall speed well and live long. Upon the same day he commanded his Son to be led to hanging; and as he was led towards the Gallows, came riding against him upon a Horse, the fifth Master towards the Palace, who came before the Emperor and saluted him with all reverence; but he despised his salutation, and put him in fear of his life. The Master said unto the Emperor, My Lord, I have not deserved for to die; and to despise my Salutation, it is not for your Honour:

nour: for your Son hath not with us been of such condition, as ye repute him, as ye in short time shall find; and that he speaketh not, is of his great wisdom: and know ye that he shall well speak as his time cometh, though he now speaketh not, as you in short time shall hear. But that he would have shamed your Wife, believe not, for so wise a man as he is would never attempt so shameful a deed: and if you put him to death for your wives words, ye shall not escape without shame and vengeance, like as Ippocras escaped not without vengeance for the death of Gallienus his Cousin. The Emperor said, that would I fain hear and understand. Then said the Master, what would it avail me to tell you this Narration for your profit, if in the mean season your Son should die; wherefore if you will call again your Son, it shall be discovered at your pleasure, after do as you think best. The Emperor bad call again his Son, and set him in prison, and then began the Master to tell on the manner as followeth.

The Example of the fifth Master.

SOmetimes there was a famous Physician named Ippocras right cunning, who excelled all others in Learning and Science: He had with him his Nephew Gallienus, the which he loved so much: This Gallienus

nus was of excellent wit, and applied all his mind and wit to learn of his Uncle the Science of Physick. When Ippocras perceived that, in so much as he could, he hid from him his cunning, fearing he should excel him in that knowledge, for the great wit he was off.

As Gallienus saw this, he studied and exercised, in so much that in short time he had perfect cunning in Physick, for the which Ippocras envyed him much. It happened upon a time thereafter, that the King of Hungary sent his Messenger unto Ippocras, that he should come unto him for to cure his Son. Ippocras excused himself, and sent his Cousin Gallienus with Letters of his excuse for his not coming. When Gallienus was come before the King, he was wor-

worshipfully received, and they marvelled Ippocras would not come. He excused him, saying, that he had many great things to do, and he might not come, but hath sent me in his stead; and with the help of God I shall make whole the Child: That pleased very well the King, Gallienus went to the Child, and when he had seen the Vertue, and touched his Pulles, he said to the Queen: O excellent Princess, I pray you hear and suffer my words, and tell me who is the Father of the Child, she said, who should be the Father but my Lord the King. Gallienus said, I am sure he is not the Father: she answered, if you will say that for a truth, I shall cause your Head to be smote off: he answered, I say once again, that this King is not the Father, and I am not come hither to lose my head, for I have not deserved any such reward, and was going his way. The Queen spake, O good Master Gallienus, if ye will keep it secret, and not discover me, I shall open unto you my heart. The Master said, God defend that from me, that I to any Person should shew it: and therefore O noble Queen, shew it boldly to me, for it shall never pass my mouth, and I shall make your Son whole; she said, if ye do that, ye shall have a good reward; hear therefore what I shall say: My fortune came hither unto my Lord, the King of Burgundy, and he was so long con-

conversant with me, that this Child by him I bear. Then said the Master, fear not, I knew it was so before. And anon he gave the Child Medicines, and compounded things, whereof to eat and drink, and the Child was eased of his infirmity. And when the King heard that the Child was recovered of his sickness, he gave unto the Master a good reward: but of the Queen he secretly received a great gift, and special thanks, and so went his way. And when he was come home, Ippocras his Master demanded of him, saying, have ye beheld the Child? and he said, yea: then asked he him what he gave him, either compounds or uncompounded things: then said Ippocras, that Mother of the Child is not true to her Husband: That is truth saith Gallienus. Then Ippocras was moved with envy, and thought in himself, if there be not found a Remedy, my Sciences shall be no more set by, but he shall be praised above me. And from that day forward he devised how he might slay him. Upon a day Ippocras called him, and said, come go with me to seek and gather Herbs in the Garden: to whom he said, Master I am ready. And when they were come into the Garden, Ippocras said, I see that this Herb is right vertuous, stoop down, and gather me of it. And Gallienus did so. And as they went about the Garden, said Ippocras, Now I well perceive

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the odour of this Herb, that is more precious than Gold; and therefore stoop down to the ground and draw it out with the root, for it is much worth: Gallienus bowed down himself to pull out the Herb, and Ippocras drew out his knife and killed him: After that Ippocras fell sick to the death, that the strength of his Body failed him, and did as much as he could to help himself, but that could not be. And as the Scholars and Disciples heard of it, they went hastily unto him, and did all they might or could for profit of his health, but it availed them nothing.

When Ippocras this perceived, he said unto his Scholars: fetch me a great Tun, and fill it full to the brim with Water; and when they had so done, he said unto them: Make now therein an hundred holes; and when that was also done, there went none of the Water out. Then said Ippocras, Behold my most dear Disciples how the vengeance of God is fallen upon me, as you may openly see: For in this Tun are an hundred holes, and goeth not thereout any drop: Right so there cometh no vertue out of the Herbs to help me, and therefore what ye do unto me, helpeth not; for I must die: but my dear Children, if my Nephew Gallienus were alive he could heal me, whom I have slain, and that grieveth me sore, and therefore the vengeance of God cometh upon

upon me; and this said, he turned to the wall and gave up the ghost. Then said the Master unto the Emperor, My Lord, understand ye well what I have said: he answered, yea right well: what hurt had it bèn to him if Gallienus had lived.

The Master answered, it had bèn better for Ippocras at that time had not he died, and therefore by the right wise judgment of God, his Medicines availed him not, and therefore I shewed to you that it shall happen worse to you if that you put to death your Son for the words of your Wife, who in time of necessity shall ease and succour you. And consider you not, that ye have after the first wife, wedded this wife that ye now have: And so you may the third and fourth, and never shall ye have such a Son, that shall save you from peril. The Emperor said, truly he shall not die.

Then said the Master, then do you that becometh the wisdom of your years, and the Royalty of your Person, and I commend you to God, and I thank you that ye have this day for me spared your Son. The Emperor said, I mark this well, that women are very crafty, therefore I will not for you, but for my self spare him,

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The Sixth Complaint of the Empress.

WHen the Empress had knowledge thereof, she shewed her self so impatient, that all that saw her, or heard her, wondred, and said to the Emperor, your wife pineth as though she would shortly die. The Emperor hearing thereof went to her, and said, wherefore (good Lady,) be you so impatient? She answered, saying, O Lord, how should I hold it in, when I am the only Daughter of a King and your Wife, and in your company I have had great despite, and you have promised to punish him, but performe it not? The Emperor said, I wot not what to do, ye labour to have my Son put to death, and the Maisters labour to save his life; and amongst these I know he is my Son: but where the truth is, that I know not. Then said she, this is the cause whereof I complain, that ye believe the Maisters more than me; and therefore it shall happen to you, as it did to a King and his Steward.

Then said the Emperor, tell me that Example, peradventure it may move me sooner to put my Son to death; she said gladly, but I pray give attention to what I say: and began as ensueth.

The ſixth Example of the Empreſs.

THere was a King moſt proud and deformed in his Viſage, ſo that all women hated him. The King thought to deſtroy all Rome, and carry away the Bodies of Peter and Paul; who while he was in the mind, called his Steward that was ſecretly with him of his Privy Council, and ſaid unto him, go ſeek a fair woman that this night may ſleep with me. The Steward anſwered, My Lord, ye know your infirmity, and no woman would do evil without a great ſum of mony. The King ſaid, think you for my money I will want one? have I not Gold and Silver enough? though it were a thouſand Florents I would it give.

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The Steward hearing that, was smitten with covetousness, and went to his wife, which was fair, chaste, and of good kindred, and said to her, O my good Wife, my Lord desireth to sleep with a vertuous Woman, and will not forbear it though she ask a thousand Florents; and hath commanded me for to provide him one: therefore I counsel you, that you may get that mony. The Wife said, were it so that the King were not so proud and foul of Visage, yet would I not consent for the sin against God. The Steward said, I command you, and promise you, that without you consent herein ye shall never have a good day with me: she hearing that trembled, insomuch that for fear she consented unto him.

The Steward then went unto the King, and said, Sir, I have found a fair Woman, and she is come of a very good House, which will not have less than a thousand Florents; in the Evening she shall come, and early in the morning must go away, that she be not seen. The King answered I am contented. When night was come, the Steward led his Wife to the Kings Bed, made fast the door, and went his way. Early in the morning the Steward arose and went unto the King, and said, my Lord, it will be day within a while, it is good you perform your promise, and let the Woman go. The King said, This Woman pleaseth me

so well, that so soon she should not depart. When he heard that he departed all sorry, and tarried a while and came to the King again, and said, My Lord, the Morning is come, therefore let the woman go, and as I promised her, lest she be ashamed. The King said, yet shall she not go; therefore go out, and shut the door. The Steward right sorrowful departed, and went up and down with an heavy heart, till the clear day appeared: then he entred again into the Chamber, and said, my Lord, it is clear day, suffer the Woman to depart, that she be not ashamed. The King answered, I say she shall not yet depart, for her company is to me well pleasing. The Steward hearing that, could no longer forbear to hold his own counsel, but said, O my good Lord, I beseech you suffer her to depart, for it is mine own Wife. The King hearing that, said to him, open the Window, and when it was open, the bright day appeared, and he beheld the Woman fair, and perceived it was the Wife of the Steward, and said, O thou stain of Manhood, and shame of the Creation, why hast thou for so little Money shamed thy good Wife, and delivered her unto me unwitting? Therefore haste thee and get thee out of my Realm, and never come in my sight; for if ever I see thee, thou shalt die the most shameful death that can be imagined. When the Steward heard that,

that, he fled, and durſt not abide, and never more came into the Realm. And the King kept that Wife all his life-time in great honour; and gave her plenty of all things that to her appertained.

After that, the King cauſed to be aſſembled a mighty Army of puiſſant men of War, and went to the City of Rome with great might, and beſieged it on all ſides, until the Romans would have delivered to him (for to have withdrawn himſelf from thence) the Bodies of the Holy Apoſtles, St. Peter and Paul.

Then there was in the City Seven Wiſe Maſters as ye now have, by the Counſel of whom all the City was governed. And the Citizens came unto them and ſaid, what ſhall we do? It behoves us that we give unto our Enemies the Bodies of the Holy Apoſtles, or the City. Then anſwered the firſt Maſter, I ſhall with my Wiſdom this day ſave the City, and the Bodies of the Apoſtles. And ſo every one of them promiſed for one day to do the like, in like manner as your Maſters have promiſed your Son. With that the King began to aſſault the City in all parts. Then began the firſt Maſter to alleadge ſo wiſely to have Peace, that the King that day left his Aſſault, and withdrew a little from the City: And ſo did all the Maſters one after another, till the laſt; Unto whom came the Burgeſſes of

the City, and said, O Master, ye shall understand, that the King hath sworn, that to morrow with all his strength he will win the City, and we must all be in jeopardy to lose our lives: Therefore acquitting your promise, defend us from danger, like as your fellows before you have done. Then answered the Master, Fear not, for to morrow, I shall by my cunning shew such an operation, that the King and all his might shall leave the Stage. The next day the King gave a great assault to the City; then went the Master and cloathed himself in a marvelous strange Vesture, having therein the Feathers of Peacocks, and other Fowls of divers Colours, and took two bright Swords in each hand one, and went therewith and stood upon the highest Tower of the City, and began to move and turn, and shew himself towards the Host, so that they might all behold him; and he held in his mouth the two bright Swords that marvellously shined. They without the Kings Host beholding that, said unto him, O King, behold on the top of yonder Tower a wonderful thing: yea (quoth he) I see it right well; it is marvellous, but what it is I know not. They said, it is the God of Christian Folk, that is come out of Heaven to slay us with two Swords if we longer abide. The King hearing that, trembled for fear and said what shall we do? There is but one

way,

way, and that is, that we depart from hence least their God revenge himself upon us. Then began the King with his Host to flye: Notwithstanding there was no need, for they of the Master was deceived. When the Romans saw that, they hastily pursued them, well armed, and slew the King with many of the people, and in that manner (by great subtlety of the Masters) was the mighty King with his Army subdued. Then said the Empress unto the Emperor, Lord, have you understood what I have said? He said, yea, with good attention. She said, now you have heard what I said unto you at the beginning of this Narration, of the Steward, that the King trusted so much, which for covetousness shamed his own Wife, and for that was banished out of the Land: in like manner your Son for the desire he hath to the Empire, intendeth to destroy you: But whilst he is in your power, do with him as the King did with his Steward. If you will not put him to death, then put him out of your Empire, that you may live in safeguard of your life. And have you also heard how the King lay before Rome, and how he was by the Wise Masters deceived, and he with his followers were slain? In like manner the Seven Wise Masters intended to deal with you, and with crafty wiles deceive you, and in the end traiterously murther you, that so your Son might

reign in your Empire. Whereupon answered the Emperor, that shall not be, for to morrow my Son shall die. Then he commanded his Servants forthwith to lead his Son to Execution. When the people heard these things, they gathered in great Troops, much lamenting the death of the Emperors Son. And as soon as the sixth Master had heard thereof, he hasted to the Emperors Court, and saluted him with reverence, but he disdainfully threatned him that he should be put to death with his Son, for he was with them made dumb and a Ribauld, which was shewed towards his Wife. The Master replyed, I have not deserved to die with your Son, but to have large Gifts, for he is not dumb, as you shall hear within three days if he may live so long; but if you put him to death for the Words of your Wife, then I shall marvel at your Wisdom, and without doubt it shall happen to you, as sometimes it happened to a Knight that so much allowed the saying of his wife, that he was bound to an Horse-tail, and drawn through the City to the Gallows. The Emperor said for the love of God shew me that Example, that I may beware of that evil. That I will not do, said the Master, without you call again your Son. Then he commanded to call back his Son: And the Master began as followeth.

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The Example of the sixth Master.

SOmetimes there was an Emperor of Rome, which had three Knights, whom he loved above all others: in the same City there was an ancient Knight that had wedded a fair young Wife, which above all things he loved, as you do the Empress: the Lady could sing with such sweetness, that many desired her company. It befel on a season as she sate in the House, her Visage turned to the Street that she might see them that walked by, and began sweetly to sing, that all Folks delighted to hear her. By chance came that ways a Knight of the Emperors Court that heard her voice, and beholding her with a willing mind and attentive ear, he was exceedingly taken in love: And entring the house, fell into talk with her greatly, but chiefly of love, and amongst other talk, he demanded of her, what he should give her to sleep by her side one night? She answered, one hundred Florents. Then said the Knight, tell me when I shall come, and I will give it you. Sir, quoth she, when I have convenient time I shall send for you. The next day she sung in the same place, and the second Knight of the Emperors Court came by that way, who likewise was smitten in her love, and he also promised her an hundred Florents; to whom she made the like promise. The third day came to her another Knight, and unto him likewise she consented,

and

and he promised her an hundred Florents, if she should give him knowledge of the time; which she also promised. These three Knights having so secretly spoken with the Lady, that not one of them had knowledge of one anothers coming unto her. Now the Lady was deceitful, and came to her Husband, and said, Sir, I have a secret matter to shew you, wherein if you follow my counsel, our poverty you may largely relieve. The Knight replyed, tell it me, and I will kéep it as secret as my life, and fulfil it to the uttermost of my power. She answered, three Knights of the Emperors Court have béen with me one after another, in such wise, that none of them knoweth of anothers counsel, and each Knight offered me an hundred Florents. Might we an hundred Florents get, and no man know it, should not our poverty be well relieved? Then said the Knight, yea, therefore whatsoever you will counsel me, I shall willingly perform: then said she; I give you counsel, that when the Knights shall come with their Florents, you shall stand behind the Gate with your Sword drawn, and as they come (being they come one after another) you shall slay them, and so we shall have the three hundred Florents they bring, without any mans knowledge. The Knight answered, O my best beloved wife, I fear this evil cannot be hid, and we shall therefore suffer death if it were known;

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She answered, I shall this work begin, and therefore make a good end, fear not. When the Knight saw she was so hardy it caused him to be more bold; then she sent for the first Knight, and he came without tarrying to the Gate, and knocked; and she asked if he had brought the hundred Florents: he answered I have brought them. Then she let him in, and he had no sooner entered but her Husband murthered him. Immediately came the second Knight, and in like manner was slain. And not long after came the third Knight, whom also he slew. Having finished the butchery, they conveyed the murthered Bodies into a secret Chamber. When they had thus done, the Knight said unto the Lady, O dear Wife, if these dead bodies should be found with us, we shall die the most shameful death that can be imagined, for it is not possible but these three Knights will be missed in the Emperors Court, and great search will be made for them throughout the City. She answered and said, Sir Knight, I have now this work begun, and will make a good end, fear it not, I have said. This Lady had a Brother which had the Government of the Wealth of the City, that on nights watched in the Streets with his fellows: She stood at the Gate, and called unto her Brother, and said, O my best beloved Brother, I have a secret matter, which

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I would not make it known, therefore come in with me, and I will relate it unto you. And when he was entred the House, the Lady received him friendly, and gave him Wine, and said, my beloved Brother, this is the cause I have called you, for I have much need of your good counsel. The Brother answered, speak boldly, and whatsoever I may do, to my power, shall be at your desire, without any letting. Then said she, yesterday came a Knight in friendship, but afterwards he fell into such variance with my Husband that he slew him: and he lyeth here dead in my Chamber: now my dear Brother, we have no man that we may trust, but only you: And if this dead body be found in our House, we shall be put to death. Now she, mentioned but one. Her Brother said, deliver him me in a Sack, and I will bear him to the Sea: she hearing that, was glad thereof, and delivered him the Body of the first Knight: he took it, and went a good space, and cast him therein: and as soon as this was done, he came to his Sister, and said to her, Give me of the best Wine, for you are of him quit: and she gave him thanks, and went to her Chamber, as though she had gone for Wine, and began to cry aloud: The Knight that was cast into the Sea is come again. As her Brother heard that, he marvelled sore, and said, Give me

him

him, I shall sée if he will rise again, and took the second Knight (supposing it had bèen the Body of the first) and went to the Sea, and with a stone drowned him. That done, he went again to his Sister, and said, now fill me a Cup of good Wine, for I have drowned him so dèep, that he shall never come again. Then said she, thanks be to God; and went again to her Chamber, and feigned to fetch Wine, and cried aloud, Alas he is risen again, and is come out of the Sea! and as her Brother heard that, with a great marvel, he said, what Devil is this that I have cast into the Water, and yet he is come again, deliver him me the third time, and I shall sée if he will come again. Then she gave him the third Knight, which he believed had bèen the first, and went without the City to a great Forrest, and made a great fire to cast him therein, and when he was almost burnt, the Brother went a little distance to do his nèed. Then came a Knight that was to ride to the City, where in the Morning should be a Tourney and Justing: it was cold weather, and dark, and not far from the City; and when he saw the fire, he drew thereto, and alighted and warmed him.

The Watchman came and said, what art thou? the Knight said, I am a Knight. Then said the Watchman thou art no Knight but a Devil, for I first cast thée into the Water,

then

then with a great stone I drowned thée, and the third time I put thée into this fire, supposing thou hadst been burnt; and yet thou standest here: and then he took the Knight with his Horse, and cast them both into the fire. After that he went unto his Sister, and told what had hapned; and said, now bring me the best Wine: for after I had burnt him, I found him again by the fire with a Horse, and have cast them both into the fire: and by this his Sister perceived he had burnt a Knight of the Tourney: who anon brought him the Wine abundantly; and after he had well drunk, he departed thence. Not long after, there fell a great contention betwixt the Knight and his Wife, so that he smote her; and she had indignation thereof, being angry, and said, that many heard her: O wretch wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the three Knights? certain men hearing that, laid hands on them, and brought them to the Emperor; and the Woman confessed that her Husband had slain the three Knights of the Emperors, and how he took from them three hundred Florents. And it being so found, both were drawn at a Horse-tail and hanged. Then said the Master to the Emperor, have you understood what I have said: He answered, right well: I say for certain that Wife was the worst woman that might be; for first she moved him to murther, and afterwards discovered him.

him. The Master said, without doubt it shall happen to you worse, if you put your Son to death by advice of your Wife. The Emperor said, my Son shall not die this day. The Master hearing that, gave thanks to the Emperor, and took leave, and went his way.

The seventh Complaint of the Empress.

When the Empress heard the Emperors Son was yet living, as a mad woman, she ran to the Emperor weeping, and saying, O unhappy woman! what shall I do? I must needs slay my self that am ashamed, and no punishment thereupon done. The Emperor answered, God defend that you should have mind on such a wicked deed; suffer a while and you shall have a good end. She answered, Sir, the end shall be evil; for of that shall follow us great confusion. The Emperor said, leave off such talk. She said, Lord, it shall come to you and to your Son, as to a King and his Steward. I pray tell that Example. She said, I will gladly, but I fear you will hear me no more: For next day the seventh Master shall speak, and save your Son from death as the other six have done, and when your Son shall speak; of whose words you shall have such joy and delectation, that the love betwixt us shall be wholly forgotten. The Emperor said, that is impossible, for I shall never forget your love.

Then

Then said she, my best beloved Lord, if it please you, I will tell you one Example by which you shall beware of many perils, especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his Masters. The Emperor said, tell on. And the Empress began to tell as hereafter followeth.

The seventh Example of the Empress.

There was a King which loved his Wife above all things, insomuch that he closed her within a strong Castle, and bare the keys thereof himself: the Lady was therefore heavy and comfortless. Now in far Countries there was a valiant Knight, which lying on his Bed dreamed he saw one of the fairest Queens that ever

ever eye beheld, whose love above all others he desired to obtain, and if he might see her walk, he should certainly have some knowledge of her, by whom to him great Friendship and Honour should come. To the Queen the same night by vision of the same Knight, the like was also shewed, and as yet they had no knowledge of each other, neither of Name or Fame. When the Knight had thus dreamed, and seen (as he thought) a most vertuous and comely Lady, he determined that his foot should take no rest till he had found out the Lady, that in his Dream seemed so glorious: And having took Horse, and all that was necessary for his journey, he travelled throughout divers Regions, Countries, and Kingdoms, till at last he came into the Land, where this Queen was by her jealous Husband kept in a strong Castle. When this Knight was come unto the City, and had for a season therein sojourned, it fell out, that as the Knight walked by the Castle, (and knew not as then, that the Queen was therein kept) she was at that time sitting in a Window to see the people pass by, and amongst others she espied the Knight, and knew him to be the man of whom she had dreamed before: The Knight by chance lifted up his eyes, and perceived the Lady in a Window, and his mind gave him that it was she of whom he had dreamed, and she began a Song in Love. As he heard that

he was taken with her love. That Knight from thenceforth daily walked about the Castle beholding it all over, to espy if any way he might get in, to declare his mind unto her. The Lady perceiving that, presently endited a Letter, and secretly conveyed it unto him from the Casement of her Chamber Window, which when he had perused, and understanding the will of the Lady, he began to haunt Justs and Tournaments, and did perform so many marvellous Acts, that the fame of him came to the ears of the King; and as soon as the King heard thereof, he sent after him, and said unto him, Sir Knight, I have heard that you have got much honour at our Justs and Tournaments; wherefore if it please you to abide here and dwell with us, we shall give you large reward. The Knight answered, O mighty Prince, I am your Servant, I would I could do any Service that would please your Magnificence; without taking any reward, save one thing before all other I desire. The King said, shew unto me boldly what that is. The Knight answered, my Lord, seeing that it hath pleased your most Excellent Majesty to take me for your Servant, and one of your grave Counsel, it seemeth to me most expedient for both our delights, that I have a place near the Wall of the Castle, that I at all times might be more ready at your call, when you need. The King an-

answered, I consent, make it as you think best. Then the Knight caused many Workmen to be brought, and having so done, he chose out certain for his purpose, and caused them to build him a fair lodging near the Walls of the Tower: this being finished, he made a Covenant with one of the Workmen, (whom he thought fittest) to make a secret way to the Queens Lodgings: and when this was finished, he killed the Workman, because he should not make it known. Having thus done, he went in unto the Quéen, and did her reverence as became him, and they discoursed of many matters. Having thus passed the day, the night drawing on, he desired he might sleep by her one night, but she often denyed him; yet nevertheless consented unto his request. Now they having spent the night in pleasure, and morning being come, the Knight returned to his Lodgings: and the Quéen began to think with her self, what shall I do, if I should make my Husband acquainted herewith? two evils would come thereof; the one is my shame, and peradventure, he would utterly forsake me and cause me to be driven out of the Land for ever: The other is, that he would slay the Knight, for death it is not possible for him to escape; therefore I think it more expedient to be secret therein then to reveal it. After that, the Knight as often as it pleased him, went in

unto the Queen, and did his will with her; and she gave him a Ring which the King had given her at her Wedding. This Knight was so famous in Justing, that in every Battle and Tournament he had the Victory: For which cause he was in great favour with the King, so that he made him Steward and Governour over all his Land.

It happened on a day, that the King disposed to ride a hunting, and commanded his Steward to be ready on the morrow to go with him: whereupon he offered himself willingly. On the morrow they entred the Forrest, all day chasing the wild Beasts, and were so weary that the King sat down by a Fountain to rest, and the Knight by his side: The Knight was no sooner set, but he fell asleep by the King, having the Ring on his finger, which the Queen had given him: which the King perceiving, knew it well. When the Knight awaked, and perceiving the King had seen the King, he fained himself to be sore sick, and said, my honoured Lord, I feel my self so sick, that if I do not haste me unto my Lodging, and seek out some present remedy, either by Physick, or some other course, I am but a dead man, therefore I pray you give me leave to go home. To whom the King made this answer: Go, dear Friend, in the Name of God, and see there be nothing wanting to procure thy health that my Court

King

kingdom can afford. The King had no sooner ended his Speech, but immediately the Knight took leave and getting upon his Horse, he hasted to his House, and as soon as he was come home he alighted, and hasted to the Queens Lodgings, and gave her the Ring again, and told her withal how the King had espyed it upon his finger, when they were both set down to rest: withal he told her, that he feigned himself to be very sick, for which cause the King gave him leave to return to his Lodgings: He also prayed her, that if the King at any time should call for the Ring, she should shew it unto him. This done, he took his leave of her, and went again unto his Lodging. Not long after, the King came to the Queen, and she received him right lovingly; and after a little time had passed, the King said unto her, my Renowned Lady, shew me the Ring that I gave you, for I have a great desire to see it. She answered: O my best beloved Lord, why at this time do you desire to see it? then said he, if you shew it not to me incontinently, it shall repent you. Then she arose and went to her Cabinet, and took the Ring out of it: and having thus done, she brought it to her Husband: and when he had seen it, he was half ashamed, and said, my best beloved Queen: O how like is that Knights Ring unto this, which I saw upon his finger! for I believe it had been mine, and that was

the cause I did ask so hastily for it. And of this suspicion I yield my self guilty, my dear Lady in this behalf: The strength of the Tower deceived me, for I thought none could get therein but my self alone, in regard none had the keeping of the keys but my self. She said unto him, my dear Lord, wonder not, for one King may be like another, and Workmen seldom make one piece of work, but others make the same: But God forgive you in that you have suspected me; for you know the strength of the Tower, and the keys you have always in your presence, and trust no man therewith. After that the Knight ordained a great Dinner, and said unto the King, My Sovereign, my Lady and Love is come from out of my Country to seek me, for whose sake I have ordained a Dinner, and would entreat your Highness to do me the Honour, as to dine with me this day, and take such Meat as shall be provided. The King answered, most willingly will I do you that worship, and more. The Knight was glad thereof, and by his secret way went unto the Queen and said unto her, My beloved Lady, you must do thus: come to my House the privy way, and cloath your self richly, and deck your self with Jewels, and other Ornaments, according to the Custom of my Country, then shall you sit at Table with my King, as my Sovereign Lady, and make

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good chéer: She replied, Sir Knight, I am ready to do according to your desire. When the time appointed was near, and the King coming from the Castle towards the Knights House, in the mean time by the secret way the Quéen entred the Knights Lodgings: (before the King could come) and apparelled her self after the manner of the Knights Countrey. When the King entred the House, she with Courtly Salutations received him; and when the King had beheld her, he demanded of the Knight what woman she should be that séemed so fair? Then answered the Knight, my Renowned Lord, it is my Sovereign Lady, that for the love she beareth me, is come out of my Country after me, to know why I should absent my self so long from her love and service. The Spéeches being ended, the Knight caused the King to sit down at the Table, and made the Quéen sit by him: The King thought it was his Quéen, and said within himself, O how like is this Woman unto my Wife? So the strength of the Tower still deceived him, that he gave more credit unto the Knights words, than to his own eyes. The Quéen began to talk to the King, and for to stir him to eat and drink, and make good chéer: and as the King heard her voice, he said unto himself: O blessed Lord, how like is this Woman to my Quéen in her behaviour, spéech, visage, and in all

other conditions! and still the strength of the Tower deceived him. In the end of the Feast the Knight prayed his beloved Lady to sing before the King; and she began to sing a Song of Love. When the King heard her, he knew her voice, and thought unto himself, is not this my Wife? and yet how can this be, I having the keys of the Tower my self in keeping? so all Dinner time the King sate debating thus within himself. Dinner ended, he willed the Knight forthwith to take up the Table, he having urgent occasions that moved him thereunto, for he was sore troubled in mind. Whereupon the Knight said, My Lord, what is the reason you are so melancholy? What is that discontenteth you? be not troubled, if it please you, we shall make you some pleasant sport. And the Gentlewoman said, my beloved Lord, if it please you with us to abide, we shall make you all the delight that this place can afford; if your Queen her self was here, she could not give you more content. Whereupon the King began to be angry, and said, take away the Table, for I may no longer abide here, until that I have resolved my mind. Thereupon the Knight straightway obeyed the King, and took up the Table, giving thanks to all, but especially to the King his Sovereign Lord and Master.

Now the King departed, and went with all

haste,

haſte into the Caſtle, to ſée whether that his Quéen were therein or not: But in the mean time ſhe went in at the Privy dor, and ſtripped off her uppermoſt Veſture, and put her ſelf into the ſame habit the King left her attired with. When the King entred therein, he found the Quéen in the ſame cloathing he had left her in before: and ſéeing all fell out contrary to his expectation, he kindly embraced her, and lovingly kiſſed her, and ſaid unto her, This day have I eaten with my Knight and with his loving Lady, who came out of her Country unto my Court to find him out, who being met and overjoyed in the ſight of her, did preſently ordain a great Feaſt, and humbly entreated me to do him ſo much Grace, as to accompany him at his Feaſt. Whereupon I anſwered him, that for the love I did bear him, I would do him that honour, and much more if requeſted; whom I having beheld, ſhe ſéemed to me ſo fair, that ſince I was born, mine eyes have not ſéen one ſo like as ſhe is to you, inſomuch that all Dinner time I was troubled with many matters, and could hardly endure unto the end of the Feaſt, but that I muſt come to ſée whether you were here or there.

Then the Quéen anſwered him, O mighty King, wherefore do you miſtruſt me, having often found the contrary? Do you not know

that

that this Tower is so fast, strong, and invincible, that no man can enter in or out, without your knowledge? For you always kæp the keys, and will not trust any therewith; how then is it possible I should be there? you may find one man like another: you remember of late how you did mistake the Knights King: And have you more Arguments of suspition against me? was it not sufficient to debar me of liberty these many years, but you must needs be jealous besides? I tell you, O noble King, if you do not forsake your jealousie, and release me out of imprisonment before three days be expired, I will end my days herein; for I had rather live a Servant at liberty, than a Quæn in Prison. The King answered, all that you have objected is true, of which I acknowledge my self guilty; wherefore have patience for a few dayes, and as sure as I reign King of this Country, I will set you at liberty, and so he lovingly embraced her with a kiss, and returned to his own Lodgings. Now he had not rested above two dayes, but the Knight came and said unto the King, O my honourable Lord, I have long served your Highnes; now it is time I return into my own Countrey; and for all the service that I have done unto you, I desire but this one thing before my departure: which is, to give to me before the Priest, with your own hand, in

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the Church, my beloved Lady, whom I intend to wed, who followed me out of far Countries for love, and whom I shall bring thither again, as my lawful and true Wife, which will be to my great honour when I come into my Country. The King answered, that Petition and more than that (if you will desire it) will I gladly fulfil. Then the King prefixed the day of Marriage: when the good King came to Church honourably attended, the Priest was ready (adorned with his Vestments) to solemnize the Matrimony. The Knight apparelled the Queen in his own House, after the manner of his own Country, and ordained two Knights to lead her to the Church, who believed it had been his Paramour. When they were come to the Church, the Priest said, who shall give this Woman to this Knight? The King said, I shall give her unto her own Knight; and took her by the hand, and said, O good Woman, you are so like my Queen, that my love is to you the greater, and also because you shall be wedded to this Knight whom I affect above all men; and he shall be of my House, and so put the Queens hand into the Knights; and the Priest after the Order of the Church, bound them, and wedded them together in true and faithful Wedlock. When all these Rites were finished the Knight said unto the King, O most noble Lord, the Ship that I intend to go in towards

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my Country, is now furnished for my journey, and ready to sail away: wherefore I humbly beseech your Noble Grace to accompany my beloved Wife thereunto, and that you would admonish her to love me, and have me in favour above all others living, and so much the rather for your good counsel. The King with his followers (besides others) did accompany them unto the Ship, for whose departure many were exceeding sorrowful and heavy. Then the King began to say unto the Queen, My dear friend, hearken well unto my Counsel, and see that ye follow it, for it shall be to your profit: my most honoured and beloved Knight hath now wedded and done to you all the honour that in him is; wherefore look that you love, honour, and obey him above all other men, as God hath commanded, and that you be unto him true in all your dealings. As soon as this Speech was ended, he delivered her unto the Knight, saying my blessing be with you both, and our Lord keep and conduct you safely unto your own Countrey. Then the Knight and the Queen bowed their heads to the King, and gave him thanks for all the kindnesses that he had done them, and having so done, they committed him to the Almighty, and entred into the Ship; the Mariners hoisted sail before the Wind, and within a short space the King lost sight of the Ship, and thence going

hastily

haſtily into the Caſtle, he went to ſéek for his Quéen; and when he could not find her, he was moved over all the parts of his body, and ſought about all the Tower, ſo long till at laſt he found out the hole that the Knight had cauſed to be made; and when he ſaw that, he wept bitterly, crying out, Alas, alas, This Knight in whom I had ſo great confidence, hath robbed me of my Wife! was I not a Fool, that gave more faith unto the words of a Knight, than to mine own eyes?

Then ſaid the Empreſs, my Lord, have you underſtood what I have ſaid? The Emperor ſaid, as well as may be. Then anſwered the Empreſs, Remember how he truſted the Knight, and yet the Knight deceived him: in like manner do you truſt the Seven Wiſe Maſters, who labour to deſtroy me your wife: and you give more credit to their words than to your own eyes: for you have ſéen how your ungracious Son hath rent and ſcratched me, whereof yet I bear tokens and marks about me, as you may ſée; alſo you know well how your accurſed Son hath ſhamed me, and you mark not how they defend him in this his folly. Therefore it is to be feared that it will happen to you worſe than to the King of whom I have ſpoken unto you.

The Emperor replyed, I will believe mine own Eyes before I will give credence to their

their

their words, and therefore to morrow I shall do justice upon my Son. The next day the Emperor commanded his Son to be brought before him; which being done, he commanded him to be led to the place of Execution, there to suffer death according to the Law. Then there began to arise great noise and bewailing amongst the common people, for the death of the Emperors only Son. At last when the seventh Master heard it, he ran immediately unto the Officers which were leading him to the Gallows, and said, my Friends, I pray you not to make overmuch haste, but stay your hands a while, for I think this day, (with the help of the Almighty God) to save him from all perils: and from thence the Master hasted him to the Emperors Palace, and did him reverence according to his accustomed duty: But the Emperor with great indignation made him this answer, never more have you any joy in this world, for that you have sent my Son home untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well speaking; for which cause you shall be all put to death with him. The Master answered, O most noble Emperor, the time is not long betwixt this and to morrow noon; then (by the grace of God) you shall hear him speak discreetly, and shall declare the truth of all things, and this I promise you he will perform to the full upon pain of my life, if you will

will ſpare him ſo long time: if you find it not ſo, then take my life, and the lives of us all. Then ſaid the Emperor, if I might but hear my Son ſpeak, it would give me ſufficient content, and I would not deſire longer to live. Then anſwered the Maſter, all this and more you ſhall hear and ſee, and confeſs it to be true, if you will but abide this little time, and then the ſtrife that hath been betwixt us and the Enemies will clearly be decided. And if you ſuffer him to be put to death through the words of your moſt ungodly Wife, I tell you of a truth, it ſhall happen worſe to you than it did to a Knight that died for a little blood that he ſaw his Wife to bleed, to whom afterwards ſhe was moſt unnatural: then ſaid the Emperor, that Example would I fain hear. Then ſaid the Maſter, let your Son be called again, and I ſhall tell you ſo notable Example, that during your life you may beware of the unſtableneſs of Women. Then the Emperor ſaid, I ſhall; go call my Son again, upon condition, that to morrow I ſhall hear him ſpeak as you have promiſed: the Maſter ſaid, do that my Lord, for it ſhall be ſo, and began to tell as followeth.

The Example of the ſeventh Maſter.

THere was a Knight that had a fair young Wife, whom he loved entirely, ſo that he could

could not be out of her ſight. It happened on a time that they played together at Chels, and the Knight by chance had a knife in his hand, and ſhe fortuned to ſmite her hand on the knife, ſo that a little blood began to appear. When the Knight ſaw his wife bléd, he fell to the ground in a ſwound; his wife ſeeing that, caſt cold water on his Face, inſomuch that he came a little to himſelf, and ſaid lightly, call the Curate with the Holy Sacrament, for I muſt die; for the blood that I have ſéen come from your finger hath ſmitten death to my heart: Then the Prieſt came, and confeſſed him much, and adminiſtred the Sacrament unto him, and anon he died: for whole death there was great ſorrow, eſpecially by his Wife: alſo after the obſe-

obsequies were finished, she went and lay upon the Grave, and there made great lamentation, and said, she would never depart thence, but as a Turtle-Dove she would for the love of her Husband there abide and die. Then went her Friends and Neighbours unto her, and said, what availeth this for his Soul, to live here weeping until you die? It is better that you go home, and there give Alms for the love of God, and that shall more avail your Soul, then in this place to abide. To whom she answered, I pray you hold your peace, you are evil counsellors, consider ye not, how I am from him separated by death, for a little blood he saw come out of my finger: therefore I shall never from hence depart.

Her Friends hearing that, made her a little House nigh the Grave, and putting therein all things necessary, went their ways, thinking within a while she should be weary to be alone, and so desolate from all company, and thereby desire again the company of the people.

In the City was then a Law, that if an Offender against the Law were hanged, the Sheriff all night should watch the dead body armed; and if it happened that the body hanged were stoln, the Sheriff should lose all his Lands, and his life at the Kings pleasure. It happened soon after the Knight was dead, that a man should be hanged for trespassing, so that the Sheriff all

that night watched by the Gallows, not far from the City, and the Church-yard was not far from the same: then began the Sheriff to be so cold, that he could not possibly endure it, but was even ready to die, except he might speedily warm him, it was so extream cold, and so great a Frost; and by chance he espying a fire on the Church-yard, he hasted and came thereto, and when he was come near to it, he knocked at the little house. The woman said, who at this time knocketh at the house of the sorrowful woman? He answered, I am the Sheriff that hath endured much cold, and am ready to freeze to death, unless without delay you let me warm my self; she said unto him, I fear that if I let you in, ye should cause me to be more heavy. He said, I promise you, that I shall say no words to your displeasure. Then she let him in; and when he had sitten a while by the fire, and was well warmed, he said unto her, O Fair Woman, with your licence, would I fain speak but one word with you. She answered, Sir, say what pleaseth you. Then he said, O Lady, you be a fair Gentlewoman, rich and young, were it not more convenient for you to dwell at home, and to give Alms, then to waste your self here with weeping? She said, Sir Knight, had I known this before, you had not come in; for I say to you as I have said to others oftentimes, you know my Husband loved me so well, that for a little

little blood he saw me bléd out of my finger, he is dead; wherefore I will here die for the love of him. As the Knight heard this, he took leave and went again unto the Gallows; and when he was come thither, and saw that the Thief (he left their hanging) was stolen away, he began to wax heavy, and said, wo is me, what shall I do: for I have lost my life, and all my goods: and going up and down thus full of sorrow he knew not what way to turn himself: at last he concluded to go to the desolate Lady, and shew her the heavines of his heart, to wit, if she could give him any good counsel: When he was come thither, he called, and she asked him the cause: And he said, Madam, I am the Sheriff that was right now with you, and I would fain shew you the secrets of my heart; therefore, I pray you open the dor. And he went in, and said unto her, O most vertuous Lady, I am now come to have your advice; for you know the Laws of the Land are, that when any man is hanged, and stolen off the Gallows, the Sheriffs life and goods are in the Kings hands: now it happened while I was here, and warmed me, the Thief was stolen; therefore I pray fair Lady, for the love of God, give me your best advice what to do. She answered, I have compassion upon you, for by the Law you have lost your life and goods to the King, do now after my counsel; and

ye shall lose neither: he answered I am to you greatly bound, hoping to have good comfort. She said, will you then promise to make me your Wife? the Knight answered, would God you were indeed so minded; but I fear you disdain to humble your self unto so poor a Knight: she said, I give you my will there; and he gave her again his will, and consented to be her Knight during his life. Then said she, ye know such a day my Lord was buried, which for the love of me died; take him out of the Sepulchre, and hang him up instead of the Thief. The Knight answered, Lady, your counsel is very good; then went they and opened the Sepulchre and drew him out. The Knight said unto the Lady, how shall we now do? because e're the Thief was hanged, two of his Teeth were smitten out, and I fear me if that were perceived I shall die the death. Then the Lady said, take a stone and strike out two of his Teeth. The Knight answered, Madam, that may not I do, for while he lived he was my trusty Friend, and it should be to me great rebuke to do so disloyal a deed to his Body, being dead. She answered, for your love I shall do it; and presently took a stone, and smote out two of his Teeth, and said to the Sheriff take him and hang him upon the Gallows like the Thief. The Knight said, I fear to do it, for the Thief in taking was wounded upon his Head,

and

and he lacked his Ears. O, Madam, God forbid that I do so to the dead body, that I loved so well in his life. Then said she, give me your Sword, and I shall for your love do it, and so took the Sword, and smote a manly stroak on the dead mans forehead, and cut off his Ears, and when she had thus done, she said, now hang him. Then the Knight answered, yet I fear to hang him, for the Thief wanted both his Stones, and if he be searched, and not found without, all my labour is lost. Then said she, I never saw man so fearful, seeing the matter is so sure: Take a knife, and cut off his Stones. And he answered, that I may not do in any wise, and therefore I pray you spare me, for you know what a man is without his Stones. She said, for the love of you I shall do it, and took the knife and cut of her Husbands Stones; and said, now take the Churle, thus disfigured, and hang him up without dread: and they went both, and hung the Body upon the Gallows: and so was the Sheriff delivered. Then said the Lady, now ye be delivered from all dangers by my Counsel, therefore I desire you (according to promise) that ye wed me. The Knight said, I have made a vow that I shall never wed other so long as I live, which I shall perform: Then he said, O thou most shameful and worst of all Women, who would take thee to Wife: an honourable and

loving Knight was thy Husband, who for a little blood that he saw issue out of thy finger died. Now hast thou smitten out two of his Teeth, cut off his Ears and Stones, and made a great wound in his head; what Devil would marry thee? therefore thou shalt never shame good man more, I will rid thee of thy life; and so drew his Sword, and with one stroak, smote of her Head.

Then the Master said unto the Emperor: My Lord, have you understood what I have said? He answered, right well: Amongst all women this was the worst, and the Knight rewarded her accordingly, that she should no more do shame. The Emperor said, moreover, O good Master, might I but hear my Son speak, I should have no care of my self. Then said the Master, to morrow you shall hear him speak, and he shall shew the truth of all the variances betwixt us and the Empress, as I hope, and so took leave of the Emperor and departed.

How DIOCLESIAN, the Emperors Son complained on the Empress; and how he excused himself to her complaint.

After that all the Masters took counsel how they should bring the Child out of Prison, and lead him to the Palace; so they went to the Child in Prison before mid-day, his coun-

counsel to hear: to whom the Child said, what you will, shall please; but busie not your selves how I shall answer, or what I shall say; for with joy I shall answer all that shall be demanded of me. When the Seven Wise Masters heard that, they were exceeding joyful, and cloathed him in Purple and cloth of Gold, and two of the Masters went before him; one on his right hand, and another on his left, and the other three followed him, and before all went twelve men with instruments of Musick, who brought him with great melody to the Palace. When the Emperor heard the melody, he demanded what it was: then it was told him by the standers by, saying, mighty Emperor, it is your Son which cometh before you, and before all your Lords, to speak and excuse himself of all that is laid to his charge. The Emperor said, that is good tydings, if I might hear my Son speak. And when the Child was come into the Palace, he rode to his Father, and said unto him: Hail my most dear and Royal Father.

And when the Emperor heard the voice of his Son, he was so glad, that for joy he fell to the earth, but his Son hasted to take up his Father again, and when he came to himself, then began the Son to declare the whole matter to his Father: and there came so great a multitude to the Palace, to hear the Child speak, and

the noiſe of them was ſo great, that the Child could not be heard. The Emperor conſidering that, cauſed Money to be thrown into the Streets, that the People therewith ſhould be buſied out of the Palace, the better to hear the Child ſpeak: but they regarded not the Money. When the Emperor perceived that, he commanded ſilence on pain of death: And when they were all ſtill, the Child began to ſpeak as followeth: O moſt dear Father, before I ſpeak any thing, I entreat you, that the Empreſs with all her Chamber-Maids may be preſent. So the Emperor commanded the Empreſs with all her Maids to come without delay. The Empreſs hearing that (in great fear) came with her Maids: and the Child bade them

them to ſtand before the people on a row, that he might ſée them. Then ſaid the Child, Sir, behold the Chamber-Maid that ſtandeth there in grèen, (whom ye know the Empreſs loveth above all others) command her to be uncloathed before us all, and ſée what ſhe is. The Emperor ſaid, dear Son, that would ſhame us all, to have a woman ſtand naked before us; he ſaid, if it be a woman it is my ſhame; if not, let the ſhame abide in her. When ſhe was uncloathed, ſhe appeared to be a man, whereat they wondred.

The Complaint of the Emperors Son, on the Empreſs.

Then ſaid the Son unto the Father, behold this Ribauld hath many a night lain with your Wife in your Chamber, and hath defiled your Bed, and him the Empreſs loved above all others, which thing you did not know.

When the Emperor had ſèen theſe things, he with great indignation gave command that both the Empreſs and Ribauld ſhould be burnt; but the Son anſwered, My Lord and Father, make no haſte to give judgment, till I have reproved her for the grievous ſlanders ſhe did falſly accuſe me off, and declared how unjuſtly ſhe hath complained of me, and ſought all means how to take my life. Then ſaid the Emperor, my dear Son, I commit all the judg-

ment

ment into your hands. The Son answered, if she be found a Lyar the Law shall give sentence against her: but my Royal Father, when you sent for me, at her earnest request, then I with my Waiters beheld the Stars, by which I perceived, that if I should have spoken unto you, or any living creature within the space of seven days, I should have died a most shameful death, and for that cause only I did forbear to speak until this present.

And whereas the Empress most unjustly hath accused me, that I would have ravished her, therein she lyeth falsly; for she most adulterously provoked me to defile the Bed of my most gracious Lord and Father the Emperor. And when she in no wise could bring me thereto, she took Pen, Ink, and Paper, and bade me write the cause wherefore I would not yield. And when I had written the cause thereof, and how I would not my Fathers Orchard defile; then she began to tear her Cloaths, and scratch her Visage, so that it gushed forth with blood, and cryed with a loud voice, This your Son (having a mind full of lust) would have wronged your Princely Bed, and I resisting his lust, most inhumanely hath he torn my flesh. When the Emperor heard this, he beheld her with a full countenance, and said in this manner: O wretched Woman, was not thy Ribauld sufficient to fulfil thy foul and letche-

rous

rous appetite, but wouldst also have made my Son? Then fell the Empress at the Emperors feet, and cryed for mercy. The Emperor said, O thou cursed and unhappy Woman, thou askest forgiveness but art worthy of none, for thou hast deserved to die in three respects: first, in that thou hast committed Adultery: secondly, in that thou most lasciviously hast provoked my Son to a most abominable sin, and laid the crime falsly and unjustly upon him: Thirdly and lastly, in that thou hast every day incited me by thy false Tales to put my Son to death; therefore the Law shall have its course against thee, and condemn thee to death, as thou hast deserved.

Then answered his Son, Most Noble Father, you know well that for her leasings I was daily led to hanging: But my Masters with the help of God hath delivered me. O my most honourable Lord and Father, it was told you by the Empress, that I should also (by the help of my Masters) depose you: and that I did labour by all means to destroy you, and to sit in your Throne: Would you not then have much grieved? Have you not the whole command and Government of this your Kingdom? Wherefore then should not I use all the skill I have to help you, my most honoured Father, rather then any way to destroy you? and seeing from you I have my living, I will repute you my Sove-

reign

reign Lord and Father, during my life, and not in any manner deprive you of your Honour, but busie my self about governing the same, and all your commands I shall fulfil: but it is as the Father that cast his Son into the Sea to drown him, because he said he should live to be a greater Lord than his Father was, and yet the Son by providence was saved, and became greater than his Father, and yet was no hinderance to him, but profited them much: also you see, that my life and carriage is never like to hinder you, but shall be to your comfort. Then said the Emperor, blessed be the Almighty God, and the hour I begat thee, and desired such a Son, that I find so expert in all things; tell me an Example, by which we may perfectly understand thy wisdom, and my heart the better to enjoy thee.

Then said the Son honourable Father, command first silence to be made, that I be not letted till I have done; and when that is ended, give Sentence according to Law upon me and the Empress. Then commanded the Emperor silence; and the Child began to tell in ample manner as followeth.

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The Example of DIOCLESIAN the Emperors Son.

THere was a Knight which had but one Son that he loved right dear in the beginning, as ye have loved me, whom he delivered to a Master that dwelt in a far Country, to be brought up in learning and knowledge. This Child as he waxed in years encreased in wisdom and knowledge very much. And when he had been with his Master seven years, his Father desired to see him, and sent Letters that he should come again into his Country, and visit his Friends, as you sent for me. The Child was obedient to his Father and came: at whose coming he did exceedingly joy, for that he was grown as well in comliness of Body, as in Doctrine and Learning, and to every man appeared pleasant and gentle.

It happened upon a day, that the Father and Mother sitting at the Table, the Child serving them, a Nightingale came flying before the Window where they sat, and began to sing so sweetly that they marvelled: And the Knight said, O how sweetly this Bird singeth! Well were he that could understand his Song, and shew the interpretation thereof. Then said the Son, my worshipful Father, the Song of this Nightingale I could declare, but I fear your displeasure. The Father said, say boldly

boldly my Son the interpretation of the Bird, and ye shall prove whether I be angry or not, but I shall mark well the cause of my anger. When the Son heard that, he said, the Nightingale said in her Song, That I shall become a great Lord, honoured of all men, namely of my Father, who shall bring me water to wash, and my Mother shall hold the Towel. The Father said, thou shalt never have such service of us, nor such dignity shall follow thée, and in great madness and wodness he took his Son upon his shoulders, and ran to the Sea, and cast him in, and said, lie there interpreter. The Child could swim, and swimming to Land, where he was four dayes without Meat or drink: the fifth day there came a Ship, and as

the

the Child saw that, he called to the Ship-men, and said, for the love of God deliver me from death. The Shipmen saw it was a fair young man, and had compassion on him, and with the Boat fetched him aboard, and carryed him into a far Country and sold him to a Duke. The Child grew very proper and fair, and the Duke loved him, and had him greatly in favour.

Upon a time the King of that Realm called all the great Lords and Noblemen within the Realm together, to sit in Council. This Duke then prepared to go to the said Council; and giving great regard to the wisdom of the Child, took the Child with him. And when they were assembled before the King and his Council: My well beloved Lords and Friends, said the King, will you know the cause wherefore I have assembled you? They answered, we all are (Sovereign Lord) at your command. Then said the King it is a secret that I shall shew you: if any man can declare what it signifieth, I swear unto him by my Crown, I will give him my only Daughter in Marriage, and he shall be my fellow in the Realm so long as I live, and after my death shall possess my whole Kingdom. And the Mystery is this.

Three Ravens follow me still wheresoever I go, crying out with such horrible voices, that the pain is grievous for me to hear them, and much more to behold their loks: wherefore if

there

there be any man which knoweth the cause of this their earnest following of me, and can shew what they mean by their crying, and avoid them away from me, without doubt I shall fulfil this promise that I have made. And as the King had thus said, there was none found in all the Council, that understood the cause, or could drive away the Ravens. Then said the Child unto the Duke, my Lord, think you the King will perform what he hath promised? Will you, said the Duke, that I give the King knowledge of what you can do? Then the Child said, I will my life pledge that I shall make good what I have said. When the Duke heard that, he went to the King and said, my Lord and King here is a young man that doth promise to satisfie you, in all that you desire touching these Ravens, if you will fulfil what you have promised. The King swore by the Crown of his Kingdom, the which I have promised shall be fulfilled. Then he brought the Child before the King, and when the King beheld him, he spoke unto him after this manner: O fair Child, can you answer this my question? the Child answered, Yea, my Lord, and that in the best manner: Your question is, Wherefore the Ravens follow you, and horribly call upon you? To which I answer: It happened, that there were two Ravens, a Male and a Female, that brought out between them

them a third Raven: and in that place there was a great Famine and scarcity of all manner of Food, that Men, Beasts, and Fowls dyed for want. Now the third Raven was at that time very young, and not able to fly abroad, to get her living: the Female she left it, seeking how she might get her own living; and came no more to the Feast. The Male seeing that, with great penury and labour fed the young Raven till he was able to fly: and when the Dearth was gone, the Female Raven returned home again to the young Raven, and would accompany with him: but the Male seeing that, would have driven her away, saying, she in his great necessity left his company, and therefore now he should have no fellowship with her. She alledged, that she had in his hatching great labour and sorrow, and suffered much penury, and for that cause she should rather enjoy his company than the Male.

For this cause my Sovereign Lord they follow you, asking which of them shall have company with the young Raven, and this is the cause of this horrible clamour that they make daily unto you. But my honoured Lord, when you have given sentence, you shall never more be troubled with their crying. Then answered the King, because the Female hath forsaken the young Raven in his necessity, it standeth with justice that he should not follow him, but

do without this fellowship. And whereas she saith, that in hatching and bringing forth she had great pain and travel, that helpeth not, for her pain was turned into joy, as son as she saw the young Raven in the world. But in regard the Male is the cause of the generation of every Beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air; and also because the young Raven in his necessity was sustained, and fed by the Male, therefore I conclude both for judgment and sentence definitive, that the young Raven shall abide with the Male and not the Female.

When the Ravens heard that sentence, with great noise and cry they flew up into the air, and were no more seen in all the Region.

This done, the King demanded of the young

man

man what his name was? he answered, I am called Alexander: Then said the King I will that you grant me one request, which is, that from henceforth you take me, and none other, for your Father; for you shall have my Daughter to Wife, and the whole Government and possession of my Realm. Young Alexander above still there with the King, and every man did exceedingly love him; for he began to haunt Justs and Tourneys, wherein he always won the Prize before all other in Egypt, so that his peer was not to be found, neither was their so hard a question put to him, but he could make known the true sence and meaning thereof.

At that time there was an Emperor named Titus, who excelled in courtesie and curiosity all other Emperors, Kings and Princes in the world; insomuch that such Fame flew over the World of it, that whosoever would profit in cunning, manners, or behaviour, must go to the Emperors Court. When Alexander heard thereof, he said to the King: my most honourable Lord and Father, you know that the world is full of fame of the Emperor, that it is very delectable to abide in his Court, wherefore, if it please you my renowned Lord and Father, I would very gladly go to his Court that I may obtain more wisdom, and grow more prompt in manners and behaviour, than now I am. Whereupon answered the King: it pleaseth

me right well; but take with you plenty of Gold and Silver, and other necessaries, that you my Honour there may save, and have also that which to you is most requisite and necessary. And it seemeth unto me most expedient, that before your departure you do marry my Daughter.

Then answered Alexander, Will it please you my Lord to spare me at this time, and at my return I shall wed her with all honour unto her appertaining. The King answered, Since it is your will to go unto the Emperors Court, I give my consent: Then Alexander took his leave of the King, and took with him abundance of Treasure, and went to the Emperors Court; where, when he was come, with many followers he went before the Emperor, and fell upon his Knees, and did him Reverence.

The Emperor rose from his Seat Imperial, and kissed him, and asked whence, and what he was, and wherefore he was come: He answered, I am Son and Heir to the King of Egypt, and am come to serve your most high Majesty if it please you to accept of me. The Emperor said he was heartily welcome, and committed him to his Steward: and made him his Carver. The Steward ordained him a fair Chamber; and provided all things that were necessary to the same; and Alexander behaved him-

himself so well, that in short time he was beloved of all people.

Not long after came the Kings Son of France to serve the Emperor, and to learn good qualities and comely behaviour: him the Emperor received honourably, demanding his name; and of what kindred he was come: he answered I am Son to the King of France, and I have to name Lodowick your Servant: Then said the Emperor, I have made Alexander my Carver, and you shall be my Cup-bearer, that always ye may serve at my Table; and commanded the Steward to assign him a Lodging, whom he placed with Alexander. These two were so like in stature, visage, and condition, that hardly the one might be known from the other, but that Alexander was more cunning then Lodowick, for he was Feminine and shamefaced; and these young men loved well.

The Emperor had only one Daughter, named Florentine, right fair and gracious, that should be his Heir, whom he loved intirely; she had a Court and Servants assigned: to her the Emperor every day accustomed to send from his Table of his Dainties, in token of love, by Alexander, insomuch that the Daughter began to have him marvellously in her favour, because of his wise and comely behaviour.

Upon a day Alexander had such business, that he served not at the Table, nor any other

in his room: Lodowick perceiving that, ſerved for him, and as ſoon as he had ſerved in his laſt ſervice upon his knée, the Emperor commanded him to bear a Diſh to his Daughter, as he was wont, thinking he was Alexander. Then Lodowick went to the Emperors Daughter, ſaluting her with great Reverence, and ſet the meat before her; till then he had not ſéen her. She perceiving it was not Alexander, ſaid to him, What is your name, and whoſe Son are you? He anſwered her, Madam, I am the Kings Son of France, and my name is Lodowick: ſhe ſaid, I thank you for your pains and then he departed. In the mean time came Alexander to the Table, and they fulfilled their Service.

Dinner being done, Lodowick went to bed ſore ſick: Alexander perceiving that, went to his Chamber, and ſaid unto him, O my beſt beloved Friend and Fellow, how is it with you, and what is the cauſe of your infirmity? He anſwered, the cauſe I know not, but I am ſore ſick, and fear I cannot eſcape death. Alexander ſaid, the cauſe of your infirmity I know well; for to day as you bear the Meat to the Emperors Daughter, ye beheld her beauty ſo fervently, that your heart was raviſhed with her love. Whereupon he anſwered, O Alexander, all the Phyſicians in the World could not more truly judge my ſickneſs, but I fear

fear it will be my death. Then said Alexander, be of good comfort, I will help you unto my power, and forthwith went to a Merchant, and bought with his own Money a fair Cloth, set with precious Stones, unknown to Lodowick, and presented it in his behalf to the Princess: As soon as she beheld it, she asked where he had that costly Cloth: he said, Madam, of the Son of the most Christian King of France, who sendeth it you for your love; for he having but once beheld your Princely Face, is grown sick even unto death; wherefore if you suffer him to perish, you will never recover honour.

Then said she, God Alexander, would you counsel me to lose my Virginity? God defend that; and be sure Alexander that for such Messages you shall never win thanks of me: therefore go out of my sight, and speak no more thereof. When Alexander heard that, did obeysance and departed.

The next day Alexander went again to the City, and bought a Chaplet that was twice the value of the Cloth, and went to the Princesses Chamber and gave it her on the behalf of Lodowick. And when she saw that costly gift, she said unto him, I marvel that so often you have seen and spoken with me, and have not done your own errand in speaking for your self, but for another. Then answered he, O Madam I have not done so, because my birth is

not to be compared to yours: also my heart was never so wounded: and he that hath a good fellow, is bound for to do him true fellowship. And therefore now excellent Princes, of your most abundant pity have compassion on him, and make him whole that you have so sore wounded, that it be not for ever laid to your cruelty and hardness of heart; she answered him, go your way, for at this time I will give you no answer, and as he heard that he departed.

And the third day he went to the City, and bought a Girdle that was of more value, and costlier then the Chaplet was, and presented it to her in the behalf of Lodowick: and when she beheld that gift so precious, she said unto Alexander, say to Lodowick that he come to my Chamber about the third hour in the night, and he shall find the door open: And Alexander hearing that, was glad, and went to his fellow and said, my best beloved fellow be of good comfort, for I have conqueted the Princes to you, and this night I shall bring thee to her Chamber. And when that was said, he started up as though he had awaked out of his sleep, and as well revived, and for great joy became well: the next night Alexander took Lodowick and brought him to the Chamber of the Lady, with whom he was in solace all night: and from that time forth all her mind was upon him, so that there was but one love between them both.

And

And after that Lodowick used many times to visit her, so that in Process of time it came to the ears of the Knights and Gentlemen of the Court, how that the Emperors Daughter was known by Lodowick: and they conspired among themselves how they might find him and intrap him, so as to take him. As Alexander had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them; and when the Knights understood that, they feared Alexander and suffered his fellow to go in peace. Alexander many times put himself in jeopardy for him, he not knowing thereof; but the Princes knew it well.

In short time after came Letters to Alexander of the death of the King of Egypt, that he should hastily come and receive his Kingdom with honour and joy; and that shewed he unto the Princes and to Lodowick, and also of his departing; wherefore they were sorrowful: he said also to the Emperor, my honourable Lord, pleaseth it you to understand, I have received Letters of the death of my Father, wherefore it behoveth me to go and receive the Kingdom, and that you will be pleased to give me leave to depart; and for all the benefits to me done, I offer my self and all my goods: and rather than I should by my going, any way displease you my Lord, I will forsake all my Realm, and abide with you still.

Then

Then said the Emperor, know you for certain that for your departure I am right heavy, for you were the best Servant in my Court: but it becometh not an Emperor to hinder his Servants from their advancements: but rather promote them to higher honour: therefore go you unto our Treasurer, and he shall deliver you as much Gold as you will have, and in the Name of God (and my blessing) go into your Country. And thus Alexander had leave of the Emperor, and bade him farewel: and they were also sorrowful for his departure, for he was beloved of all.

Lodowick with the Princes brought him on his way seven miles at least: after that Alexander would not suffer them to go any further: then fell they both to the ground with great heavines. And Alexander took and lifted him up, and comforted him with fair words, and said, O Lodowick my best beloved fellow / I warn you that the secrets betwixt you and my Lady, you hide as privily as you may, and take good hæd to all things: for I wot another shall come and be in my stead, that shall envy you of the Favour and Grace that you stand in with the Emperor, and day and night shall lie in wait to take you in a fault, and to put you to rebuke. Then answered Lodowick, and said, O Alexander, I shall beware as much as it is possible: but how shall I do when I shall

want

want your company: Therefore one thing I shall desire of you, that you take this Ring of me for a remembrance. Then said he, I shall for the love of you gladly receive your Ring: and yet I shall never without the Ring forget you: and so he committed them both to God. Then they embraced each other about the Neck, kissed and departed.

Not long after the Kings Son of Spain, named Guido, was received of the Emperor in the room of Alexander, to whom the Steward assigned Alexanders Chamber the which was very sore against the will of Lodowick, but he could not help it.

Guido seeing that Lodowick against his will, had him in his fellowship, he grew envious against him, so Lodowick for a long time, for fear of the same Guido, kept him from the company of the Lady: nevertheless afterwards, being overcome with her love, sometimes he went again unto her as before. Guido perceiving the same, waited so long thereon, that he knew the truth and was therefore certain that the Princess was by Lodowick known, and he had company with her.

Upon a time it happened that the Emperor stood in the Hall, and praised Alexander for his gentleness and wisdom. Guido hearing that, said, my Lord, he is not so worthy to be commended as you imagine, for he hath a long time

been

bæn a Traytor in your House. Then the Emperor said, tell me how? Guido said, You have but one only Daughter, which shall be your Heir, and her Lodowick hath defiled, through the help of Alexander; and he goeth to her every night as it pleaseth him. As soon as the Emperor heard thereof, he was sore moved, and Lodowick happened to come through the Hall; and as the Emperor saw him, he said, What hear I of thee, thou untrue body? if it be proved, thou shalt die the most shamefullest death that can be devised. Lodowick said, my Lord, what is the cause? Guido answered, I deposed here before my Lord, that thou hast defiled his only Daughter, and every night dost Fornication with her: and with Battel I shall make it good upon thy Body, with my Body. Then said Lodowick, I am innocent, and falsly thou dost bely me, and thereupon I hold the Battel, and trust to God thy falshood shall come upon thine own head. Then the Emperor assigned them the day of Combate. That done, Lodowick went unto the Lady, and shewed her the cause, and the day of Battel, by the Emperor assigned, and in what manner Guido had accused him; and said unto her, Now it behoveth me to have your counsel, or else I must die; for you know it would not avail me to have gain-said the Battel, without I should have yielded my self guilty: Guido is hardy

hardy, that his like is none but Alexander, and I am feeble, and therefore if I fight the Battel against him I were but a dead man; and so you shall abide rebuke. Then said she, follow my counsel, in that you mistrust your self, go hastily unto my Father, and say, ye have received Letters whereby you are assured, that the King your Father is sore sick, and lyeth upon his death-bed, and he desireth to speak with you in person, and to dispose of his Kingdom before he departeth this life: so desire him to give you leave for the love of your Father, to go to visit him, and that he will prolong the day of battel; that in the mean season you may go and come; and when you have gotten leave, as hastily as you can, secretly go to King Alexander, and take him apart, and shew him the cause of your coming, and desire him in this extremity, and he will help and save us.

When Lodowick heard this counsel, it pleased him well, and he did according: and having obtained leave, and respite of the Battel assigned, he departed towards Egypt, and never stayed till he came into King Alexanders Castle. When King Alexander understood his coming, he was very glad, and went to meet him, receiving him honourably, and wondring much at his coming.

Then said Lodowick, O my dear Lord, and best beloved friend, my life and death is in your

hands,

hands, for as you said before, that I should have another Fellow, which should lie in wait to espy me and destroy me, without I loked more wisely to my self; so long as I could I did abstain from her; but afterwards the Kings Son of Spain watched me till he perceived the truth: in the end he accused me to the Emperor, so that on the eighth from this day I must be ready to fight with him body against body: and ye know he is a very strong hardy man, and I am weak and feeble: therefore hath Florentine counselled me, that I should not hide this matter from you, for she knoweth you to be a faithful friend, that would not leave us in this necessity.

Then said Alexander, is there any that knoweth of your coming unto me besides Florentine? he answered him, no creature living, for I took leave of the Emperor to go visit my Father lying grievously sick. Then Alexander asked him, what counsel hath Florentine given you, and how might I help you? he said, O my faithful friend, thus she hath counselled me: considering that we be like each other, you should come and perform the Battel, and no one would know you but she, and the Battel done, I would come again to the Court, and you return to your own Countrey. Then he asked him, when the battel should be: and he said, eight days hence.

Then

Then said Alexander: if I but one day tarry before I depart, I cannot come by the day prefixed, tell me what I shall do, I have bidden all my Subjects, that to morrow they should come to my Wedding, and if I should go, then is the day lost; if I go not to the Battel then Florentine & you are undone: what think you is best? When Lodowick heard that, he fell to the earth, and began to sorrow without measure, saying, sorrow comes suddenly to me on all sides. Then said Alexander, be of good comfort, for I shall not forsake you, though I should lose my life & Kingdom: but hear what I have thought upon: seeing we are both alike, so that the one cannot be known from the other; and as for me, I am not rightly known here, but my Barons and other my Subjects will take you for me; therefore you shall here abide, and marry my Wife in my stead, and hold the Feasts and Nuptials, and do all things as if my self were present, but when you come to bed with my Wife, look you there be true and faithful, and I shall without tarrying take my horse, and ride where the Battel shall be; and if God give me victory, I will come again secretly, and you shall go again unto your best beloved. This done, Alexander bade Lodowick farewel, and took his journey towards the Emperors Court to fight the battel with Guido; and Lodowick tarried in Egypt instead of King Alexander.

Next morning came Lodowick, as though he had been King Alexander, and solemnly in the Face of the Church he espoused King Alexanders Wife, and solemnized the Marriage Feast, with great Royalty of Delicacies and Dainties, plenty of all Wines, and divers Instruments of Musick, with great joy and chear for the Noblemen, and all others that were there assembled. And when the night was come, he went to bed with the Queen, and laid between him and her a naked Sword: whereat she wondring, but saying nothing, and so he lay with her every night while Alexander was gone.

Now King Alexander at the day prefixed, came unto the Emperor, and said, O most Sovereign Lord, I have left my Father very sick

sick and in hazard of death: nevertheless I am come to perform my promise, with a full resolution to defend my honour. The Emperor said, ye do honourably, and according to the valour of a Nobleman: and Fortune shall favour you (I hope) in your righteous quarrel.

And when the Emperors Daughter understood that Alexander was come, she sent for him; and when he came to her, she courteously embraced him, and with great joy kissed him, and blessed the time that she saw him again: and demanded where he had left her love Lodowick? Then he declared unto her the whole circumstances, and how he had left him King in his Realm. So he took his leave of her, and went to Lodowick's Chamber, no creature thinking but that he was Lodowick, except Florentine only. The next day before Alexander went to the Battel, he said unto the Emperor in the presence of Guido: My most renowned Sovereign Lord, Guido hath falsely accused me unto your Noble Grace, in saying that I should be so familiar with the Princess your most vertuous and only Daughter, to the great dishonour of your noble person, and hers: I swear by the holy Evangelist, that she was never in any wise known by me, as he hath alledged unto you, which I shall make good upon his body with the aid and help of God.

Then answered Guido, yet once I say again, and swear by the Holy Evangelist, and by all that God hath made, that thou hast had knowledge of, and defiled the Emperors Daughter; and that I will make good upon thy head.

Whereupon they leapt upon their Coursers, and ran so fiercely one at another, with their Spears, that they both broke and shivered in pieces: Then they drew their Swords, and fought so long, until at last Alexander with great might at one stroak, smote off Guido's head, and sent it unto the Emperors Daughter; whereof she was glad, and bare it unto her Father, and said, Father, behold the head of him that had so falsly defamed you and me.

When the Emperor perceived the Victory, he sent for Alexander, whom he thought to be Lodowick, and said, O Lodowick, this day your honour and my Daughters you have saved, you shall be to morrow in my favour, and whosoever shall again defame you, shall for ever stand in my indignation.

Then answered Alexander: God always helpeth them that trust in him, and revengeth wrong done to the innocent: But most renowned Lord, one thing I intreat, that it will please you to give me leave to go see how it standeth with my Father, whom I left sick, and if he be any thing amended, I shall incontinently return. Then the Emperor said,

that

that pleaſeth me; but you may in no wiſe leave me, for I cannot be without your preſence.

Alexander having taken leave of the Emperor, with all ſpeed he could, he rode back unto his Realm. Lodowick having heard of his return, with much joy met him, and friendly received him, ſaying, Moſt true Friend of all Friends, tell me how Fortune has favoured you in this your journey and buſineſs and to what end have you brought it? Then he ſaid, Go to the Emperor and ſerve him as before, for I have gotten you more favour at his hands than you had before, and have alſo cut off the head of your greateſt Enemy.

Then ſaid Lodowick, you have not only at this time ſaved my life, but preſerved me heretofore, which kindneſs I ſhall never forget, neither as yet can I requite; but God reward you, and ſo he departed to the Emperors Court; and there was no man that had any knowledge of the abſence of King Alexander, except Lodowick.

When Night was come, he went to bed to the Queen, and as ſoon as he was laid, he began ſweetly to embrace her, and with friendly words he kiſſed her. Then ſaid ſhe, you have made this time tedious, in that you have ſhewed nothing of friendſhip or love, how may this be? Then ſaid he, wherefore ſay you that? She ſaid,

every night you have laid betwixt us a naked Sword, and have never turned towards me till now. And when he heard that, he thought on the truth of his fellow, and said, O my dear Lady, it was not done for any ill will, but for tryal of love. But she said to her self, that love you shall have no more, but despite, and I will be revenged upon thée.

Then there was a Knight that she had a little loved, and she began to love him more and more, till at the last they sought how they might destroy the King; and therefore they got Poyson and poysoned him, so that if he had not been of strong complexion, he had died thereof; for it wrought so sore, that it caused him to be a most foul and horrible Leper, as

as ever was seen upon the earth. The Lords and Noblemen of the said Realm, and the Queen also seeing this, despised him and said, It behoveth not a Leper to reign over us, for he cannot beget any beautiful Heirs: and so he was deposed of his Dignity Royal, and driven out of his Realm.

In the mean time dyed the Emperor of Rome, and Lodowick married his Daughter, and after that Lodowicks Father died, so that Lodowick reigned both Emperor of Rome, and King of France at once.

When King Alexander heard of that, he thought in himself, Now my fellow reigneth, and ruleth both the Empire of Rome, and the Realm of France; To whom may I go better than unto him, for whom I have often ventured already, and took with him his Staff and Clapper, and went towards the Emperors Country.

And when he was come nigh the Gate, he sate down among other poor Lazars, expecting the giving of Alms: and upon a sudden as the Emperor went out of the Palace, all the poor Lazars began to ring their Clappers, and good King Alexander did as the other, but there was no Alms given him, so he tarried until the Emperor was set and served at the Table.

Then went King Alexander unto the Gate, and knocked; and the Porter asked who was

there? Alexander answered him, I am a poor despised man, I pray you for the love of God, turn your sight from my visage, but for the reward of God do my message unto the Emperor. He asked what was the matter? Alexander said, Go and tell him here is a Lazar right horrible ugly to see, which prayeth him for the love of God and King Alexander, that he will grant him this day to eat his Alms before him upon the earth in his Hall. The Porter answered, I wonder you dare desire that of my Lord, for all the Hall is full of Lords and Noblemen, and if they should behold you, they would abhor their meat; but forasmuch as you have required it of me solemnly, for the love of God I shall do your errand, whatsoever happeneth; and so he went and did his message to the Emperor. When the Emperor heard the Porter name Alexander King of Ægypt, he said to the Porter, Go thy ways, and bring him before me, how horrible and ugly soever his visage be, and ordain him a place before me, that he may eat in my presence.

The Porter brought him immediately, and ordained him a Place, and set him to meat before the Emperor, and when he had well refreshed himself, he said unto one of the Emperors Servants. My dear Friend, do me this errand unto the Emperor, say unto him, that I pray him for the love of God and King Alexander

der, that he will send me his Cup full of Wine. The Servant said, for the love of God I will do it, but I believe it will not be; for if you should but touch my Lords Cup he will by no means drink of the same again; nevertheless he did the errand.

And when the Emperor heard him name King Alexander, he commanded his Cup to be filled of the best Wine, and carried to him, which Wine when he had received, he put into his Bottle, and took the Ring that Lodowick had given him, and put it into the Cup, and sent it again unto the Emperor.

When the Emperor saw the Ring, he instantly knew that it was the same he had given unto King Alexander, in friendship, when he departed from him, and thought in his heart that King Alexander had been dead, or else that this man very strangely came by the King, and commanded presently that the Lazar should not depart till he had spoken with him; for in no wise could he have any knowledge of him, nor yet repute him for Alexander.

After Dinner was done, the Emperor took the sick man apart, and asked him how he came by that Ring? King Alexander demanded if he knew the Ring? The Emperor said, I know it well. Alexander said, Wot you also to whom you gave it? the Emperor said, I wot right well how it is. Then said Alexander, how is

it that you know not me: for I am Alexander, unto whom you gave the same. When the Emperor heard that, he fell to the ground for sorrow, and tore his Robes, and with many sighings and bewailings, said, O Alexander, you are the one half of my soul: how is your goodly and delicate body now so unclean and infected, that was so fair and pleasant to behold? He answered: this is happened unto me for the great fidelity you have done me in the bed with my Wife, when you laid a naked sword betwixt you and her; wherefore she became wroth and hated me, so that she and a Knight that in former time she had loved, have poysoned me as you see, and driven me out of my Realm.

And when the Emperor heard that, he took him about the neck and kissed him, and said, O my most dear and intirely beloved Brother, I sorrow to see you in this great perplexity. I would to God I might die for you. But my most dear friend, suffer patiently a little time till we have sent for all the wise Masters in Physick, to have their advice, if there be any remedy to be had or hope of recovery of your health; and if it be possible to help you, we shall neither spare Lordship, Empire, nor any other goods temporal, to make you whole and sound.

In the mean time he was brought into a fair Chamber, richly furnished with all things requisite for his ease and health. Then in all haste he

he ſent Meſſengers through all parts of the World, for the moſt expert Phyſicians that might be found, of which within a Month after, were aſſembled before the Emperor thirty, that were expert and skilful in that Sciente; to which the Emperor ſaid, my well beloved Maſters, I have a Friend that is very grievouſly infected with a foul Leproſie, whom I would very gladly were healed, and made as ſound and whole as ever he was, ſparing neither for gold or ſilver, or any other coſt whatſoever, ſo that he might recover his health again. Then anſwered the Maſters, all this is poſſible to be done in Phyſick, you ſhall ſoon underſtand, after we have ſeen the perſon: and when they ſaw him, they knew the cauſe of his infirmity, and ſaid it was incurable for all Phyſicians living.

When the Emperor heard that, he was right ſorry, and committed it to Almighty God, calling unto him moſt of the Religious men that dwelt near the Court, and a number of poor people, beſides many other devout perſons, deſiring them earneſtly to make Prayers unto Almighty God, that he would vouchſafe of his infinite goodneſs, to make whole his dear Friend King Alexander. And he himſelf (with many others) faſted and prayed to Almighty God for the ſpeedy recovery of his Friend.

Now upon a time, as King Alexander was at his

his Prayers, there came unto him a voice from Heaven, saying: Tell Lodowick the Emperor, that if he with his own hands will slay those two Children which his Empress had at one burthen, and with the blood of them wash and bathe thy body, thy flesh shall become as fair and as clear as the bodies of these little Children; if not, thou must never look to be cured whilst breath is in thy body; and so farewel.

Now when King Alexander had heard this strange voice, he began to think with himself what it was, and whence it came; then he replied unto himself, This Vision is not to be shewed; for it is contrary to humane nature, that any man should slay his own Sons for the recovery of a Stranger.

The Emperor continued night and day in prayer with great devotion, earnestly praying to God for King Alexander, never ceasing until a voice came unto him and said, How long will you thus call and cry unto me? When it was openly shewed unto King Alexander, by what means he might recover his health, and his body become clear without either spot or blemish.

The Emperor hearing that voice, he went to King Alexander, and said unto him. Of all Friends the best and most true, blessed be the most high and everlasting God, who never faileth them that put their trust in him, of

whom

whom I have knowledge, that it is shewed unto you, how you may be recovered of your Leprosie; wherefore I entreat you that you will plainly lay open unto me how it may be done, for the restoring of your former health, that we may have joy together; and if you need any thing that may do you good, I will fulfil it unto my Power; yea, and for your health give all that I have.

Alexander said, Sir, I dare not shew you how I may be cured of my Leprosie, for it exceedeth, and it is a thing against nature, therefore I will not as yet shew it you, howbeit I have a great trust and confidence in you.

The Emperor said, Alexander, put your trust in me still; whatsoever is possible to be done for recovering your health, I will do it; and therefore conceal nothing from me, I pray you.

Then said Alexander, I have of God knowledge, that if you will slay your two Sons with your own hands, and wash me in their blood, I shall be whole, therefore I have not shewed it unto you: for methinks it is against nature, that the Father should slay his own Children for the health of a stranger. The Emperor said, Say not that you are a stranger, for I love you as my self, and therefore if I had ten Children, I should not spare one for your health.

Afterwards the Emperor espied his time when

when the Empress was out of the way, and went into the chamber where the Children slept, and drew his knife, and cut both their Throats; and gathered the Blood into a Vessel, and then bathed Alexander therewith: and when he was

bathed, his body was as fair and clean as though it had been a young Child. Then the Emperor had a perfect knowledge of his visage, and kissed him, saying, O good Alexander, now I see you in the same form I have oftentimes delighted in.

Blessed be Almighty God, that ever I had these Children, by whom your health is restored, and your body made pure and clean. And as yet none had knowledge of the death of these Children, save the Emperor and Alexander.

And when the Emperor saw that good King Alexan-

Alexander was perfectly healed, he said unto him, I will ordain you an honourable company, and you shall go hence about five Miles; and the next day send me a Messenger, and let me know the day of your return. And I shall then with great solemnity come and meet you, and you shall remain with me until I may conveniently provide for the recovery of your Realm.

This Counsel pleased King Alexander well, and was performed: for on the next day following there came a Messenger to the Emperor, certifying him of the return of King Alexander.

When the Empress heard these tydings, she rejoyced and said unto the Emperor: O my best beloved Lord, have you not just cause to rejoyce, seeing Alexander King of Ægypt is now coming to see you, whom of long time you have not seen: if you please to go and meet him with your Lords and Gentlemen, I shall follow with my Ladies and Gentlewomen; and as yet she knew not of the death of her two Children.

Then rode the Emperor and Empress with a great company of Lords and Ladies to meet with good King Alexander: and when they met, with great Reverence they received him, and with great joy brought him unto the Palace, and at the time of Dinner, Alexander was placed between the Emperor and Empress, and all the mirth and chéer that she could make, she shewed unto him.

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When the Emperor saw that, he was glad, and so exceeding well pleased, that he said, O mine own Florentine, it glads me above all things that you make unto King Alexander so good cheer. Then answered the Empress, Wherefore should I not, is not his company unto us more precious than Gold and Silver: but unto you my renowned Lord, much more, for by his means you attain'd unto so great honour and dignity, and by him many times you have been saved from death. The Emperor answered, Then I pray you dearly beloved Florentine, heed my words: saw you not that deformed Lazar, which yesterday sate before our Table, and prayed me for the love of God, and good King Alexander, that I would give him drink: She said, my honourable Lord, I saw him well; a more horrible man I never beheld. Then said the Emperor, I demand of you: put case that he were King Alexander, and that he could not be made whole but with the blood of your two Sons, which you in one day brought into the world, would you that their blood should be shed, that he might bathe himself therein, and therefore have perfect health, and comely favour, as you now see him have: She answered, my renowned Lord and Husband, wherefore demand you of me that Question: I tell you of a truth, that if I had ten Sons I should gladly slay them with my own hands,

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to prepare for him a Bath, and would wash him therein my own self, rather than I should leave him in such a loathsom and miserable case, so horrible to behold, and in such danger of health withal; God might send us more Children, but such a Friend were a thing impossible for us ever hereafter to find throughout the whole World.

When the Emperor heard this, he was well pleased and said, O my loving Empress, had you rather have your Children dead, then Alexander should languish in his Leprosie: Then I shall shew you the whole truth of the matter: That foul Lazar which you saw was Alexander, that sitteth here by us, and is made whole with the blood of our two Sons and they are dead.

As soon as the Empress heard that, she began with extremity of sorrow mournfully to cry out, as nature would she should, although she had said before, she had rather see her Children dead, then Alexander remain in such misery.

The Nourishers of the Children understanding this, presently with great crying ran to the Nursery: and great bewailing was made through the Emperors Court for his two Sons, and when the Nourishers came to the Chamber, they found the Children playing, and singing a Song of praise and thanksgiving, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for restoring their lives. Then they returned with all haste

unto

unto the Emperor and Empress, and shewed unto them how the Children were living, and that about their Throats where they were cut, they had Circles of Gold: whereof were great joy and gladness in all the Court, with thanksgiving to Almighty God, for that exceeding great miracle and wonderful work.

After that the Emperor with a great multitude assembled together, went with King Alexander into Ægypt, and set him again in possession of his Realm. The Queen and the Knight, who had lived long together in Adultery, he caused to be slain. And when this was done, the Emperor had one only Sister, whom he married unto King Alexander.

When King Alexander had obtained all his Realm again, and was set in rest and peace, the Emperor returned unto his Empire: and King Alexander so wisely and politickly governed himself in his Affairs, that he overcame his rebellious Enemies.

And when he was seated in his Glory, Peace and Might, he thought upon his Father and Mother (by whom he was cast into the Sea, who dwelled in far parts) and sent a Messenger, to let them know that the King of Ægypt upon such a day would be with them, to view those parts of the Countrey, and to sport himself, and to make a Royal Feast. When the Messenger was there come, they received him with honour,

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bountiful entertainments, and large gifts, and sent him back, saying, that their services should be ready at all times to do the Kings pleasure, but that they could not possibly discern that he should vouchsafe them that honour, whereof they were not worthy as to visit them in those parts, to sport himself there a while.

The Messenger returned and shewed the King how willingly they would receive him, and in what manner they did reward him, and how faithful they were and ready to do him service, wherewith the King was well pleased. When the set day was come, the King with a fair company rode towards his Fathers house, who was to his Father and Mother unknown.

When the King came near his Fathers Castle the Knight rode joyfully to meet him, and when he came nigh to the King he alighted, and did him reverence upon his knees: but the King took him up presently, and commanded him to take horse again, and so they rode together unto the Castle.

And when they were come thither, the Mother came unto him and fell upon her knees, and welcomed him gladly; and the King took her up as lovingly and kissed her: she said unto him, My Lord, you do us (unworthy) this honour with the presence of your most honourable Personage, which we shall never be able to deserve.

After the Meat was all ready, and the time

of day was come to go to Dinner, the Father came with a Bason and Ewer, and the Mother with a Towel, saying, Sir, all things are ready, pleaseth it you to wash; and when the King saw that, he smiled, and said to himself: Now is the Song of the Nightingale true, that my Father and my Mother should gladly do as I have said, if my self would thereunto consent: But he would not suffer them to do him any such service, saying, your age is to be honoured, and therefore I would have none of it; and then he called one of his Servants, whom he commanded to do that Service. Then said the Knight, you will not suffer us to do it for our Honour, because we are not worthy thereof. The King said, have I not said, that for your age I forbear you. When the King was sate at the Table, he set his Mother on the right hand of him, and his Father on the left; and then as much as they might or durst, did behold his favour and countenance.

After Dinner the King entred into a fair Chamber, and made the Knight with his Lady to follow him, and commanded all others to void their presence.

When they were all alone, the King said, have you no Children? They answered, We have neither Son nor Daughter. And the King said, had you never any? the Knight answered, we had one Son, but he is long ago

dead,

dead the King asked of what death he dyed: And the Knight said a natural death. Then the King said, if I find it otherwise, you are found in a most horrid fault. Then asked the Knight, my most Honourable and Renowned Lord, wherefore enquire you so earnestly after our Son: the King answered, not without just cause, and therefore I must, and will know of what death he died: if you will not tell me I shall cause you both to die most shameful deaths.

When they heard that, they fell upon the ground on their knées before him, and asked his pardon and forgiveness. But the King would not suffer them to knéel, but took them up, and said, To that intent I came not unto your house, to eat your bread and to betray you: But say to me the very truth, and you shall be pardoned, for it is given me to understand that you have put him to death, and if that you be found culpable therein, and come to judgment, you must die a most shameful death. Then said the Knight, my most honourable Lord, save my life, and I will shew you the very truth. The King said, fear not, for I shall do you no harm. Then answered the Knight, and said, Most dread Soveraign Lord, we had a Son, that was wise, learned, and intelligent: and upon a time as he stood before us, and served at the Table, there came to the window a Night-

ingale that sung exceeding sweatly, whose Song he began to interpret, and to tell us what it meant, and said, this Bird singeth, that I shall become so great and mighty a Lord that you my Father shall be glad to hold a Bason with water to wash my hands, and my Mother a Towel, that if I will suffer it.

And when I heard that, I was sore moved, and vexed in my mind; and so I took him upon my shoulder, and cast him into the Sea for to drown him. Then said the King, what evil had come to you, if he had been made so great? Methinks it should have been for your honour and profit. The Knight said, my Renowned Lord, it was no Reason, but Woodness. The King answered, 'twas a great folly in you, that you would do against the Ordinance of God. And now you shall know for truth, I am your Son that you cast into the Sea, and God of his great mercy hath saved me, and by his Grace brought me to this estate and dignity.

The Father and Mother hearing that, with fear and joy amazed, fell flat unto the Ground; whom he lovingly took up, saying, Fear not but rather rejoyce, for you shall suffer no harm: but my exaltation shall be to your glory and profit: and so he kist his Father and Mother with great joy. Then began the Mother to weep greatly; and the King said to her, leave off your sorrowing, and be of good cheer, for in my

my Realm you shall be honoured above me during my life: and he took them with him into his Kingdom, where they dwelled a long time in honour and joy; and ended their days with comfort and love of all the People.

Here follows the Application of the Example to the purpose.

THen said Diocletian the Emperors Son, Lord, have you understood what I have said? the Emperor said, right well: then said the Son, my most honored and redoubted Father, although that God hath given and endued me with wisdom and understanding above others, that shall not be an impairing of your honour and might, but more for the preservation and maintenence of the same: so in like manner, the Kings excellent Majesty, which was nothing to the hinderance of the Father, but this rather for his worship, profit, and greater comfort. For as long as they lived, it was in very great joy and mirth, that they were loved of the People, and honoured of the Kingdom. Then said the Emperor, my beloved Son, I will wholly resign all the Empire unto you to govern and rule: for I perceive well by your Narration, that you have to me declared, that it is best for me, and most for my ease, that I now leave this worldly and tedious business, and the labour and care of a King, and betake me to my

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rest and ease, for I am old and feeble. Then answered the Son, and said unto his Father, My most honourable Lord and Father, so shall it be, but as long as you live, you shall have the Authority and Government of the Empire at your command, as it appertaineth unto an Emperor; but in all the businesses that are laborious and troublesome, I will always be ready to minister any service that possible I can, according to my bounden Duty.

How Judgment was given upon the Empress, and how that she and her Lover were both put to death.

Then the Emperor commanded the Judges and Justices to sit in Judgmennt, and to bring again the Empress before them, with the Ladies, and also the Ribauld, her best beloved, cloathed in the vesture and habit of a Woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the Empress: then the Emperors Son asked Sentence and just judgment upon them; saying, My most honourable Lord and Father, even as you are Emperor of the World, and that your Majesty and Power requireth to do true justice unto all your Subjects that desire it: so now I demand, that you this day do give right sentence and true judgment upon the untruth, falshood, and shame, which were put and alledg-

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ed unto me by the Empress; for the which accusations, I have been sometimes led unto the Gallows, and have stood in great jeopardy, and peril of my life, and also that she hath been to you untrue of her body, as you have seen by good proof made before you; and on the which I ask judgment: and therefore command your Justices and Judges to give sentence thereupon, according to Right, Equity and Law.

As soon as the Empress heard this, she fell flat to the earth before the Emperor, and asked mercy and forgiveness for her just offence and misdoing: but it helped nor profited nothing, for the Son would have right, and desired Judgment. Then spake the Judges and Justices, Her own misdeeds condemn her, and the report of her Lemmon by her kept and found: therefore we give Sentence against the Empress, that she shall be bound to a Horses Tail, and drawn through all the Streets of the City to the place of Execution, and there be burnt. We judge and give sentence against the Ribauld, that he shall be quartered and smitten in pieces, and his flesh cast to the Hounds and Birds of the air to devour him: and this Sentence was approbated and allowed of by the people.

Hereafter in short time died the Emperor, and Diocletian his Son governed and ruled the Empire with great wisdom, and always held and kept his Masters with him in great honour

and

and Glory. By whose counsel and wisdom he governed the Empire; and he excelled all his Predecessors in Riches, and doing Right and Justice: and his Nobles so loved him above all others in the World, that many times they put themselves in great peril and jeopardy of their lives for him. And so ended their days in joy and honour to the praise of Almighty GOD.

FINIS.

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